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IN MEMORIAM

MACLEAN'S

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MARCH 14 2005

SPECIAL REPORT | A CANADIAN TRAGEDY

Their deaths were
senseless and
heartbreaking.

But should they
spur a drug
crackdown?

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ON DEMAND BUSINESS

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OF PAIN AND POLITICS

Should the Alberta tragedy be the catalyst for a public policy debate?

WE WERE IN San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, out-of-town tourists come to see the hippies. This was 1967. I was 14, well sheltered, taking a cross-country trip with friends and his family, and one of us got pretty rowdy to me. One bartender leaping over a gutter, the sweetest of marijuana-infused wine—all the sights and smells of the so-called Summer of Love. A young woman in a peasant dress floated by, glowing beautifully, and

my friend's father asked what made her so happy. "Acid, baby," said, she replied, and danced off. That's what recreational drugs came up for many of us of a certain generation: the much-mocked era of free love, communes, political protest—and peaceful scenes in the park.

The scene in rural Mayrhofen, Austria, last week was something else.

The days of four RCMP officers, in a small motel where they had a very firm, not only shocked the community and the country but also a bright light on the multi-billion-dollar business of marijuana grow ops, and its control by organized crime. They also raised questions about what governments should do. As this week's cover story points out, the law now before the House of Commons would decriminalize pot possession, but it would also impose tougher penalties on grow ops. Is decriminalization really the way to go? Are the proposed sentences still enough? Do police need more resources? Or is full-scale drug war the wrong approach? Should the Alberta bloodshed be the catalyst for a public policy debate—or is it just an isolated tragedy, a tragedy and a tragedy?

Politicians and police obviously detect a larger issue. In one sense, this is another echo of the culture war now raging in the Senate, a battle between law-enforcement conservatives and enlightening liberals, between those who see enlightenment as liberation and those who spot redemptive war aim. There will be no stopping this fight, any more than in questions about RCMP procedure that day will easily die down. There is too much pain here.

In a way, the case is reminiscent of the Montreal massacre of 1989. That horrific event, which left 14 female students dead,

“In a sense, the question is whether liberalizing pot laws is enlightened or just routine madness not asked.”

was widely viewed as not merely the message of an angry gunman but a wrenching lesson about violence against women. After all, the murderer left a suicide note calling a feminist “feminist.” The Alberta killings may not be as perfect a fit, but the personal has turned political nonetheless.

In the midst of all, of course, is horrific Mayrhofen, where residents had flowers around the faggots at the RCMP detachment. It's a reminder of how perilous police work is, of the risks officers take for the rest of us every day. And it's a loss that, no matter how you spin it, is simply beyond words.

Bob Tevin

Executive Editor's Letter
The Executive Editor's Letter

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the British rule of India from London, or Belgium rule of the Congo from Brussels, was scarcely different than the force of arms leading to the American rule of Missouri or Cheyenne or Sioux or Navaho lands from Washington? Had the U.S. been serious about equality and the right to liberty, it might have paid reparations for the material resources plundered from Aboriginal society, which might, in turn, have limited it to such smaller spheres of influence today.

Russ Murray, Toronto, England

Fighting poverty and hypocrisy

Those of us on the front line who stay up until midnight, buttering hundreds of loaves of bread for sandwiches for the homeless already know about our "cassidy poverty and obscene inequality" ("Canada's progress," LaFontaine-Baldwin Symposium, Feb. 28). What is obscure is that Jim Maclean, John Ralston Saul is lecturing to us. Meanwhile, the government looks for ways to spend its loose change by sending people on ill-fated shuttle trips to Europe. It's time for Ottawa to cut the expense accounts and unnecessary staff and start putting some money into the social services pot. Until each one of us has a roof over our head and a meal on the table, we cannot with any pride call ourselves Canadians.

Seamus Green-Duncan, Ottawa

How fitting that you followed up John Ralston Saul's essay on poverty with a Deagan story ("Psychiatric baby" Jan. 28) that heads, aptly dated, days of the 1990s. It reinforced how much we've lost as a nation as our priorities became almost exclusively financial. I've worked on some people and observed first-hand how they struggle's only contact with poverty is to step over a street person sleeping on a ventilation grate in the rain to catch their commuter train.

Bob Barwick, Toronto

I almost have to say this, but John Ralston Saul's article was probably written in the rainwater corridor of Rialto Hall, or one of those exquisite international hotels. Judging by his article, I am certain that wealth and privilege focus the mind wonderfully. In the upper echelons of society, there is one standard: commodity hypocrisy. As a nation, it stands as for too much.

Wade Hertz, Kitchener, Ont.



One reader says some homeless people must share responsibility for their sad state of affairs.

Erratum: John Ralston Saul's accusation that our society at large is to blame for poverty and homelessness. Homelessness in Canada is not a simple product of government underfunding and unwitting victims who, when falling, must shoulder pain. We must also take into account the deliberate choices made by many (by no means all) of the homeless that result in their present sad state of affairs. The responsibility must be shared by many of the victims. We all feel compassion for the homeless, but Saul's claim—that the true reflection of our society is the one among us who has the least—is patently false.

Richard Archer, Ottawa

One solution to Canada's poverty would be to give the poor the tools they need to improve their lot. One such tool is a good, solid education. Under present conditions, teachers must cope in overcrowded classrooms with inadequate resources and supports for students with special needs. This results in

high dropout rates, high rates of illiteracy and poor preparation for higher levels of education for many of our students. Democracy is a reflection of a citizen's ability to understand and participate in the system. Those compelled to live out an existence because they are unemployed, underem-

ployed or underpaid cannot possibly be expected to engage in any political process. As a result, as John Ralston Saul correctly notes, their rights and needs are neglected as our evolving form of democracy no longer reflects the needs of the least of our citizens.

Glenn Jenkins, Lumberton, N.C.

In praise of true heroes

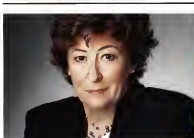
I couldn't agree more with Charlie Gillett's essay "Let's redefine 'hero'" (Feb. 28). I was once unpopular for asking why the WWII veterans were considered heroes. Those who died in the line of duty or died in desertion that led me to. I came under fire again for daring to question that word being used to describe Christopher Reeve. He was a nice guy who had the misfortune to fall off his horse. Would he have saved millions of dollars for special need research if it had not affected him personally? Every day, nurses all over the world hold the hands of dying patients. Researchers work tirelessly to find cures for illnesses. Teachers give students the knowledge and skills they need to survive in the world. These are the real heroes.

Marla Kilwein, Perth, Ont.

Charlie Gillett's example of George Orwell's take on the misuse of words rings true today for such terms as "diva," "extreme," and "cooling," all of which seem to carry no weight anymore. In an age when every kid is a rock star, every SUV owner is an adventurer and everyone can be a hero, it's good to see that Gillett is not afraid to call it like it is.

Kevin Simard, Toronto

MACLEAN'S BEHIND THE SCENES



TALKING ABOUT DEMOCRACY

In just six years, the annual LaFontaine-Baldwin Symposium has established itself as one of the country's most respected forums for discussion about our civic culture. Named after two pre-Confederation leaders who set the framework for responsible government, and headed by the Dominion Institute and His Excellency John Ralston Saul, the symposium's lecture and town hall meetings are designed to promote a better understanding of the roots of Canadian democracy.

This year's lecture—which appears in this week's issue and can be read at www.macleans.ca/symposium—was delivered on March 4 by Louise Arbour (above), the former Supreme Court of Canada Justice, now United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in Quebec City. A public dialogue followed the next day.

Arbour's address, "freedom from want: from charity to entitlement," explored the evolution of social, economic and cultural rights in Canada, as well as the passage from a concept of charity to one of entitlement, particularly following the enactment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

For the second year, Maclean's acted as the LaFontaine-Baldwin Symposium's English media print sponsor. That sponsorship is instrumental in disseminating the important ideas that emerge from the lecture, says Ruyard Griffiths, executive director of the Dominion Institute, which also promotes a better understanding of our history.

"We've created something unique in the Canadian context," he adds. "In a country that's increasingly regionalized, we bring English and French Canada together to talk about the future of our democracy. And Maclean's is a great partner in communicating the lecture's ideas to a thoughtful, informed and engaged Canadian audience."

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PAUL GROSS
Actor/Producer/Director
A Gemini Award winner who is internationally known for his role as Camille Boutin Fraser on the TV series *Due South*, Paul Gross also directed and starred in *Mr. Klein*. Gross, the highest grossing English Canadian film of the past 20 years.

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Mansbridge on the Record



MAYBE BUSH WAS RIGHT

Even U.S. critics agree that the Iraq invasion may have sparked democracy

THERE I WAS, standing near the Brandenburger Gate in Berlin, or West Berlin as it was then called. It was November 1989. I was peered on a makeshift TV platform, and as far as I could see, on either side, there were audiences from other countries doing what I was doing—talking to a camera about the incredible story unfolding just meters away. The Wall, this concrete symbol of the Cold War that had split West from East, was coming down, piece by piece, as hammers, big and small, made one blow after another. And those few days unfolded—well, just what did they signify? Now, years later, we know they meant the beginning of the end of the Soviet Empire and its stronghold on Eastern Europe. But at the time we weren't quite sure what the Wall's demise represented. Everyone agreed it was enormous, but did it simply mean the two Germanys were reunifying? When I look back at the broadcasts during that period, it was that reunification issue that most of us were focusing on.

The next week was in Moscow, and while there was a whiff of official cynicism in the air with other East Bloc countries also facing freedom ourselves, no one seriously suggested that the Russian we'd all grown up with, the heart of Communism power, was about to crumble into oblivion. Sometimes when you're in the middle of change, it's difficult to judge just how extensive the movement is and what the impact will be.

Which brings us to the Middle East today, and how we're trying to judge the depth of what surely is change. In less than a year, we've seen relatively free elections in Afghanistan

and Iraq, a hint of democracy in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, the death of Hosni Mubarak and the election of Mohamed Morsi, the Palestinian who seems bent on finding peace with Israel. And most recently, the remarkable scenes in Lebanon where people power has again scared down the grip of second power. In freedom rallies on the march across the Middle East, as George W. Bush and those who've helped design his foreign policy glibly suggest? Actually, that theory is now gaining support from unlikely sources.

Remember Walid Jumblatt? He was a familiar face in the months of the 1980s in Lebanon, went through its agonizing civil war—a long time. Once parliamentarian, he was often heard railing against the U.S. for intervening in the mess that was his country. Now, his thoughts have a different tone. Last week, he told the *Washington Post*: "It's strange for me to say it, but this process of change has started because of the American invasion of Iraq. It was cynical about Iraq. But when I saw the Iraqi people voting, eight million of them, it was the start of a new Arab world." Strange is right, because this is the same man whose wife to the U.S. was pulled after he had called Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy secretary of defense, a "traitor," obviously without full hindsight—all for that same policy that led to the invasion of Iraq two years ago this month.

It is early in this process, but Jumblatt, a controversial figure at the best of times, isn't hesitant with his prediction of where all this is going. To him, what's happening here is similar to those history-making November days 10 years ago. In fact, he makes the daring comparison by claiming that the people in his world "all say that something is changing. The Berlin Wall has fallen." We'll see. **E**

Peter Mansbridge is Chief Correspondent of CBC Television News and Anchor of *The Newsworld* on Canadian television.

FaceTime

Payday In 2006, Jean Leclair was a largely unknown Montreal politician when a salary of about \$100,000 a year, as he took it, up political affiliations. Two years later, as Obama's sponsorship money started rolling in, that annual income jumped to \$2.4 million and Leclair never looked back. Leclair's *Commissariat*, one of 14 Quebec not-for-profit companies at the heart of the sponsorship scandal, earned almost \$16 million from federal contracts in the late 1990s in part from its adum Quebec.



Friendly fire It was supposed to be a payout occasion. Knappe of by Iraq militants on Feb. 4, left-wing Italian journalist Giulio Sgrena was released.



Hardly off CEO In a holy southern town that belied his Canadian origins, ex-GD Bank CEO Sgrena offered a unique defense for his role in the 2008 World Bank's spectacular collapse in 2008: he told a



\$12 million of that went directly to Leclair, his wife and two grown children, who, as for John Gomery's inquiry was told: Leclair testified that he helped raise money for the Lebanese in the 1987 election. And while the inquiry listed a total of \$12,800 donated to one or more Lebanese people in his agency, including his son, there has been no evidence of kickbacks.

by her captors, only to be shot by a 15 Iraqi man in a Baghdad checkpoint. Sgrena, 56, was wounded in the shoulder, but the Italian secret service report with her was killed in the incident. One of nearly 250 foreigners abducted by Iraqi militants in the past 18 months, Sgrena was the first of two female journalists taken this year.

court he was more cheerleader than hands-on exec and didn't understand corporate finance. Sgrena's denial was based on the US\$1.1-billion accounting tricks the telecom giant employed to keep stock prices up, as others testified, a brilliant entrepreneur who built WorldCom (now ACS) from a small phone company and then large. Sgrena, 63, faces 26 years in prison if the jury doesn't believe him.



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HIGH FLYER

His first did it in a hot air balloon, though it took six tries and he was almost killed twice. This was a little naive Chicago millionaire Steve Fossett, 75, became the first to fly solo around the world—in a 68-hour, 31,000-mile trip—without stops or refueling. His ultralight jet was designed to allow him to cut back on fuel and glide when the winds allowed.

WORLD

COMBO UN peacekeepers sought out and destroyed a newly 60-member militia of Lendu tribesmen in the troubled Democratic Republic of Congo. The militia was said to have been responsible for the ambush and killing of nine UN peacekeepers from Bangladesh the previous week. The UN has about 13,000 peacekeepers in the DRC to help end a long-running civil war. In the past, they have been accused of standing by while warring ethnic groups attacked each other. This counterattack involved UN forces from Pakistan in helicopter gunnery and armored vehicles.



HATE GROUPS A Chicago judge who had been the target of a failed contract hit by a white supremacist last year, after ruling against his group in a copyright dispute, returned home to find his husband and elderly mother shot dead in an execution-style slaying. Police have not ruled out robbery, but they are also looking closely at hate groups, several of whom applauded the murders on their Web sites.

IRAQ A judge on the special tribunal set up to try Saddam Hussein was gunned down and killed outside his Baghdad home—along with his son, who was also involved with

the tribunal. The murders capped a particularly bloody week. A suicide car bomber in Hilla drove into a crowd of mostly Shiite men living up at a medical clinic and detonated a device that killed 115 and wounded over 130. As well, U.S. military deaths topped 1,500, while a Washington think tank reported there have been 210 mass-casualty bombings in Iraq since May 2003.

CONNECTED Abdul Basir, a radical Indonesian cleric with links to al-Qaeda, was convicted of an "evil conspiracy" for giving his prior approval to the bombers who blew up a link nightclub in 2002, killing 202 people, many of them Australian tourists. The Muslim cleric was given 30 months in prison, a sentence that outraged Australia and the U.S.

HOUSE ARREST Home decor emcee Martha Stewart began five months of confinement at her multi-million-dollar estate 70 km north of Manhattan. Stewart spent five months in prison after being convicted of lying about a 2004 stock sale. She must now wear an electronic ankle bracelet that lets authorities track her movements. She also

has to turn around her company, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, which recently posted its second straight annual loss.

ASYLUM France was the top destination for asylum seekers last year, beating the U.S. and Germany, which have been the most popular havens for most of the past two decades. According to a UN report, France received 61,660 applications for asylum in a year when the overall numbers for industrialized nations were the lowest since the 1980s.

DEATH PENALTY In a 5-4 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court abolished capital punishment for 16- and 17-year-olds. These so-called juvenile death penalty made the U.S. the only country in the world to officially execute minors. The ruling is a reprieve for roughly 70 death row inmates who were under 18 when they committed murder.

CHINA Acting, it said, to protect children from gratuitous sex, China's pornography law has shut down 47,000 Internet cafes, a minority of the reform movement.

GANG RAPE Five men condemned to death for the gang-rape of a young woman in the Punjab had their sentences overturned on appeal. The high-profile case

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been 2003, involved several tribal elders from a powerful tribe who were convicted of ordering the "banquet" rape of Mikhele Mui as punishment for a sexual incident involving her then 12-year-old brother. Police had pulled up no evidence to back the justice. The appeal court said there was not enough evidence to support the conviction.

THE POPP John Paul II's health was improving after major throat surgery to ease his breathing. But he may remain in hospital for weeks yet, Vatican officials said.

CANADA

GOMERY Making good on an earlier threat, lawyer for former prime minister Jean Chrétien filed a motion in Federal Court asking to have Justice John Gomery removed as head of the sponsorship inquiry. Chrétien had accused Gomery of bias over derogatory remarks the judge made in newspaper interviews. "The decision to go to court came after Gomery suggested last week in the inquiry that the former PM had engaged in a "conspiracy of silence" with a top aide not to read the only draft of the damning auditor general's report on the sponsorship scam that would have to act on it, a charge the aide denied.

CHILD POVERTY Almost 15 per cent of Canadian kids live below the poverty line, a proportion that has remained virtually



RARE FIND Archaeologists near Cairo unearthed an ancient tomb in an old tomb—said this well-preserved, 2,500-year-old mummy was found in a tomb containing two other mummies. It is to undergo a CT scan, as it currently being done with the remains of King Tutankhamun.

unchanged over the past 15 years, UNICEF reported. Defining poverty as households in which family income is half the national median, the UN agency ranked Canada 19th of 25 rich countries, though ahead of Britain and the U.S.

BY MERIE CHARLEUX



NHL No new talks are planned but the NHL said it intends—somehow—to be open for business next hockey season. The player's association took that to mean owners would be looking to hire replacement players. Meanwhile, a U.S. consortium involving a Houston-based sports management group and Ron Caprio of Boston pitched a plan to buy the entire league for US\$3.5 billion, or roughly US\$100 million a team. The owners said no thanks.

BUSINESS General Motors came through with its much-promised \$2.5 billion upgrade to its three main northern Ontario plants, the largest single automotive investment in Canadian history. Up to \$435 million comes from federal and provincial coffers, and the plan calls for R & D outlays worth \$200 million eventually.

PARENTAL LEAVE Quebec parents will have longer and more generous parental leave than 11 others elsewhere following a deal with Ottawa that allows Quebec to run its own plan. Under the agreement, which is being examined slowly by other provinces, leave will be available to the self-employed in Quebec, and new moms there will have the choice of 40 or 38 weeks off, with reduced benefits for the longer period.

BUDGETS Riding a wave of high-oil prices, Alberta unveiled a surplus of \$4.3 billion this year—what is more than two-thirds that of Ottawa.

Canada's military will gain \$1.1 billion in new spending over the next two years, but at the same time it must return \$430 million to the federal treasury as part of a government-wide plan to raise obsolete programs and initiatives.

ICE A surprisingly high number of Ontarians—nearly 12,000—skip on ice each year with enough force to require a trip to emergency, a study by the Canadian Institute for Health Information said. It adds to the notion that winter is a dangerous season and should be avoided when possible.



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Marketing | SIR RICHARD BRANSON

'I'D LOVE TO BRING SPACE TRAVEL TO THE MASSES IN MY LIFETIME'

SIR RICHARD BRANSON NEVER stands behind his product. The flamboyant entrepreneur/adventurer/television star much prefer the spotlight. As chairman of the U.K.-based Virgin Group—an amalgam of more than 150 companies, including music labels, airlines, hotels and magazines—Branson, 54, has built one of the world's most recognizable brands in large part by drawing media attention to himself. Last week, while launching Virgin Mobile, the new youth-oriented cellular service, in Canada, he rode in a monster truck over three cars in downtown Toronto, symbolizing his plans to crush the competition.

You have frequently put your life at risk with a lot of your stunts. Do you find it tough getting insurance?

I can't get insurance. I sign my life away for all my stunts—which is fine. I've been pulled from the sidelines by helicopters, so insurance companies walk to the other side of the street when I come around.

Say something did happen to you. Are your kids part of your succession plans?

I haven't decided yet. My daughter is becoming a doctor, so she won't join Virgin. My son is 18, and he may help us out at some stage. But if I get run over by a car tomorrow, Virgin will live on without me. Hopefully, the brand is now stronger than my name.

Virgin specializes in marketing to youth, but you're 54. What makes you an expert?
I'm a bit of a Peter Pan character who never grew up and never wants to grow up. Having teenage kids and coming from the music business has certainly helped.

How do you respond to critics who say your empire-building has been ego-driven?
Everyone wants to be proud of what they own. I do track my neck out, but I don't desperately crave being on TV or in newspapers.

Given your stunts and your show *Richard Branson's*, how can you say you don't crave attention?

Freddie Laker, who ran an airline years ago, sat me down once and told me I was never going to be able to outspend British Airlines in advertising. He said I'd have to use myself to put Virgin on the map.

How is Virgin's space program doing?
I love being able to say that Virgin is building five spacehips. And now every time space is mentioned, we're in. So far, 12,000 people have told us they want to fly to space. Total cost of the trip is US\$180,000—a bit cheap, but we've pledged to bring the price down and then hopefully build a hotel on the moon. I'd love to be being space travel to the masses in my lifetime.

What's left for you to tackle?
The government of Nigeria asked us to set up a national airline—Virgin Nigeria is launching in three months. In Ghana, we're looking into launching Virgin Mobile, and in India, we're looking into a low-cost airline. There are still a lot of places for Virgin to go.

Do you envy any other brands?
Apple has reinvented itself a number of times and is one of the companies that I most respect. Their products are innovative to overall products; they've been brilliant.

Does it bother you that you're losing the American publicity war to Donald Trump?

When it comes to our TV shows, Trump may well be established before we started. And I personally don't like his approach to business. We're chills and choose in the way we conduct our lives.

When will you retire?
Never. This is just good fun. JONAH KATZ



IS POT REALLY TO BLAME?

Not everyone agrees that the RCMP tragedy, however heartbreaking, should spur a drug crackdown

THEY NEVER SAW IT COMING.

The four Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers gunned down on the morning of Thursday, March 3, lost their lives while guarding a crime scene—a cache of supposedly stolen auto parts and a marijuana growing operation belonging to a notorious local thug named James Rossko. That morning was supposed to be taken up with the kind of dull, routine police work that officers quickly grow accustomed to. But instead, Rossko



returned to his farm outside Mayrathorp, Alta., 130 km northwest of Edmonton, with an assault rifle and a score to settle. The events that unfolded may end up having profound implications for the way this country deals with drug enforcement.

To many observers, most notably senior police officers and federal politicians, the deaths were not just an isolated tragedy, but a symptom of something bigger. To them, the murders of Peter Stevenson, 35, Anthony Gordon, 38, Lorne Johnson, 32, and Jack Myrold, 28, were a gut-wrenching call to action. More than that, the deaths were an indictment of Canada's law-averse toward recreational drugs like pot. The country had barely begun mourning the fallen officers

The killings on Rossko's property seemed like the harbinger of a ticking time bomb

when the calls began for more police, tougher sentencing, and a broad crackdown on what RCMP commissioner Giuliano Zaccardelli called the "plague" of marijuana production in our society.

Calvin Myrold, the mother of one of the slain officers, made a statement that spoke to the whole country's grief, and our deep common desire to strike back for the loss of these four young men. "It is time that our governments take a stand on this," she said.

"It's time to take our liberal-minded attitude to task. Prime Minister Paul Martin, as depend on you and we expect you to change the laws and give the courts real power."

Others, like Liberal MP Dana McGragg, were even more explicit. Pointing to a proposed marijuana bill currently before Parliament that would, among other things, decriminalize possession of small amounts of pot, he called for that legislation to be rewritten to include a minimum sentence of four years for those convicted of running marijuana grow ops. "This has gone too far," he said. "We have legislation that may

have the unintended effect of increasing marijuana grow operations. I think it's now time for Parliament to target marijuana grow operations." Those sentiments were echoed by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Professional Police Association, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, among others.

But was marijuana really the root cause of the crisis of March 3? Was it, as police suggest, an inevitable escalation in the long-running war on illegal drugs? Or was it really just the eruption of an armed and dangerous individual? To all more police, tougher drug laws, and more enterprising reality programs such tragedies from happening again? To scary criminologists who've studied the



WOULD LEGALIZING marijuana have originated crime out of the pot-traffic business? Cast your vote at www.cknews.ca

illegal pot trade, the answer is an emphatic "no." In the emotional aftermath of the tragedy, police and politicians are missing the point, they argue. And by justifying marijuana crackdowns on this basis, the authorities not only ignore the facts of the case, they run the risk of setting more hardened criminals on a pot rampage and triggering more violence down the road.

THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT that the cultivation and trafficking of marijuana is exploding in this country. And because organized crime and gangs are often associated with the pot trade, a host of societal ills are also on the rise, according to police. An RCMP report released last summer on the state of drug enforcement in Canada said that an average of 1.1 million plants were seized annually over the previous five years, and that was up 66 per cent from 1995. Pot seizures by U.S. customs officials at the Canada border surged 50 per cent between 2000 and 2003.

A recent report from the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police noted that authorities dismantled 1,496 marijuana grow ops in that province in 2002, more than triple the number raided just two years earlier. The report estimated that such operations were responsible for almost \$700 million in financial losses that year, mostly as a result of electricity stolen from local utilities. Both the RCMP and OACP reports suggested that the potential for violence associated with pot production could also increase.

"This case of grow ops is a real and real industry as we have been saying for a number of years," Zaccarelli said on the day of the shootings in Alberta. "These are major, serious threats to our society, and they are more, serious threats to the men and women on the front line who have to deal with them."

They are booby trapped. They are high risk areas, and major segments of the society are involved."

While the risk of confronting drug lords is real, police statistics suggest fears of crops and fatal shootings may be somewhat exaggerated. The OACP report said that only about two per cent of grow ops are covered in Ontario are booby trapped. Grow ops were found at only about six per cent of grow ops raided in B.C. In fact, the marijuana trade has always featured relatively low rates of violence, says Neil Boyd, a professor of criminology at Simon Fraser University. He disagrees with those who would use the tragedy to rally public support around a crackdown.

"It's not surprising when you get a horrific crime such as this and a grow op is front and centre in the portrait—people will use that to jump into the marijuana decriminalization debate," Boyd says. "It's probably more appropriate to look at this individual and what he represents rather than to focus on any policy that might or might not be such a horrible tragedy. I'm not at all clear that this case has as much to do with grow ops as it does with people whose own father disfigures him as evil."

Boyd has a point. While the debate over grow ops gathered momentum in Ottawa, the Mounties were plotting together a strategy that looked less like a full-blown drug bust than the outcome of a man many in the community knew was ready to blow. For from a shadowy practitioner of the hydroponic arts, the 46-year-old Rossio appears to have been, contrary to the face of whatever legal authority happened to pay him a visit—while

In Mayerthorpe—and across the country—people mourned the young man's death.



and the consequences for our communities and society in the sentences they laid out."

The long sentences imposed in the new federal law, which is new before the House justice committee for review, seem far removed from what has been the norm. According to a Corrections Services Canada report, there were 235 drug offenders serving sentences for cultivation at the end of 2000. Those federal growers faced an average term in custody of less than one year, compared with 1.5 years for importers and nearly two years for traffickers. Under the new law, judges who opt not to hand

engaging in a variety of enterprises that created they would.

His long sheet featured a range of offences, from using illegal firearms to unlawfully interfering to impersonating a police officer. In 1999, he reportedly shot a man on the shoulder for jay riding on his property, and he was imprisoned in 2000 for 2½ years for sexually assaulting a boy. There was plenty of other evidence to suggest he was unstable. Neighbours in the sparsely populated farm hours near Mayerthorpe described him as a loner with a grudge against the world, shattered by his family due to his mental behaviour. Rossio's 89-year-old father described him as a "wicked devil," telling the Edmonton Star that "I don't want him in my son. He must have been doped up."

Not was to tell the marijuana was Rossio's primary criminal enterprise. According to police accounts, the slain officers were awaiting the arrival of the RCMP's anti-drug unit in Edmonton, after a half-life's efforts to relocate a truck led to the discovery of what police say were more than 200 plants and some 200 marijuana plants.

Most troubling of all, though, was Rossio's remarkable disregard for the law—an attitude the local authorities knew well. It came to a head in August 1999, when RCMP accompanied a half-life to his home to search property over an unpaid debt. The Mounties declined to go in with their, instead sending him a protective vest and a radio with which to call them in case of trouble. The woman speaking to Rossio that day also said in an

interview, and "he constantly manipulated the conversation to blame the RCMP for all his troubles." She did, however, leave the farm without incident.

All told, the facts raise potentially painful questions for the Mounties that have little bearing on the issue of grow ops. Could they have done more to protect their officers against an attack unprecedented in Canadian police history? Did Rossio's predilection for guns—combined with his well-established hatred for police—warrant a closer presence on the property? A full investigation of the incident was launched last week. But it was clear the such questions were hitting raw nerves with the RCMP. "I've seen somebody walking down the street we've had a history with," spokesman Cpl. Wayne O'Connell said at one point, "we don't automatically run out guns and start pointing them at them."

'GROW OPS' ARE NOT A MA AND PA INDUSTRY, says the RCMP chief. 'These are major threats to our society.'

at one point, "we don't automatically run out guns and start pointing them at them."

THAT SAID, it should come as no shock that the drug trade has monopolized debate surrounding the killings. In fact, after all, one of the reasons the officers were on the property to start with. And there are signs of growing frustration with the proliferation of a business money in the country regard to a shortage. For years, police and regular citizens have watched helplessly as the hydroponic trade flourished in the U.S. communities, turning residential homes into de facto drug factories. And while police are calling for a crackdown after last week's tragedy, you could argue that one has long been under way—just actively little in the way of tangible results. Between 1992 and 2000, for example, the

out any jail time at all, in many cases, they are required to explain why not in their written rulings. Among judges to explain why apparently lenient sentences might expose them to criticism from their bar counterparts—or from increasingly frustrated police. "One thing the police will tell you," McEllen said, "is that drug grow is not just primarily by community, virtually, in some parts of our country, street by street."

As the justice committee gets down to studying the legislation, the possibility of imposing minimum sentences is bound to be raised.

McEllen said she and Justice Minister Irwin Cotler are open to any amendments the committee suggests. But NDP Paul Dewinter, the committee chairman, is resistant to go down the minimum-sentencing path. "There are always unintended consequences," Dewinter said in an interview. "We have a good judiciary in this country, and we have to allow their discretion." Given the public outrage over the police officer's deaths, though, Dewinter may face intense pressure for his committee to force the judges to get tough. JAMES GILBERT



TAKING A STAND ON 'EVIL'

PUBLIC SAFETY MINISTER Steve McEllen strongly suggested some of his critics' judges need to make up to the fact that big-time marijuana growers is a dangerous crime that calls for serious prison time. Speaking out after the slaying of four Mounties in her home province of Alberta, McEllen pointed to the stiffer penalties for grow op convictions allowed under the Liberal government's

overhaul of marijuana laws. The new legislation would double to 14 years the maximum prison sentence for being convicted of cultivating more than 100 marijuana plants. She said the hell-bells "the ones on the courts, the judiciary, as a nation, to take this seriously." And if that didn't make her critical view clear, McEllen added: "The judiciary needs to look to reflect the harsh reality of illegal grow ops

number of cannabis offences recorded by police rose 81 per cent. Yet a 2002 report by a Senate committee on illegal drugs concluded that pot production has been on the rise, to the point that some 50 per cent of the marijuana consumed in Canada is grown domestically.

In some quarters, the sense of futility has begun to boil over. Chalkwell, B.C., enacted a bylaw setting fines for property owners connected to grow ops. And the sorrow expressed last week over the officers' deaths often came to anger over the growth of the dope trade. "If you legalize pot, then what did those officers give their life for?" asked one retired officer from Quebec, his voice cracking. "Why would we give? We should get out there and clean it up."

But many experts in the drug trade say there is a serious danger that lawmakers and law enforcers will let anger and grief drive their decisions. By raising penalties and cracking down on supply, police may well drive more production into the hands of well-financed and well-armed organized crime gangs, Bayl says.

For example, the North American trade in heroin and cocaine has attracted a much more violent and aggressive breed of criminal element, Bayl says—largely because of the profits associated with those drugs and the penalties resulting from conviction are so much higher. Police cannot reduce demand, and by raising the stakes in the marijuana trade, they may force out small-time, non-violent producers and turn over more of the market over to hard-core gangsters, inevitably leading to an increase in violence associated with the pot trade.

BUSTING BUD GROWERS

NOV. 20, 2001: Police seized more than 4,000 plants worth an estimated \$5.5 million in a warehouse north of Toronto.

MAY 31, 2002: A cross-Canada blitz, code named Green Sweep, nets over \$10 million worth of plants in more than 160 homes.

APRIL 15-18, 2002: In part two of Green Sweep, more than 700 police arrest 255 people and seize 69,126 plants worth an estimated \$28 million across the country.

NOV. 17-16, 2003: A third nationwide drug bust leads to the seizure of 73,943 plants, valued at some \$73 million, and 360 arrests.

OCT. 14, 2002: Police bust an organized grow operation to 56 homes in Ontario, arresting 39 people and seizing 35,201 plants valued at more than \$35.5 million.

MAY 15, 2004: Police raid farmer Melissa Severeity in Barrie, Ont., which had been

converted into the largest grow op in Canadian history. It contained more than 75,000 plants and marijuana in other forms worth an estimated \$10 million.

FEB. 12, 2004: Edmonton police find approximately 5,608 plants in a warehouse with an estimated value of \$5.6 million.



Grow op in a former Severeity in Barrie, Ont.

That fear loomed by Diagne-Ocaspe's, an Ottawa lawyer and long-time critic of Canadian drug policies. Ocaspe's points out that it is extremely rare for Canadian police officers to die in the course of drug investigations. Rather than increasing efforts to stamp out marijuana, he says, government should be talking more seriously about regulation along the lines of alcohol and

tobacco. "The grow ops themselves are a product of prohibition," Ocaspe's says. "Violence associated with the trade in marijuana stems from the fact that our government in reality has chosen to deal with this drug through a prohibitory model rather than a regulatory model. There is no violence when you go to the liquor store."

But few were listening to that line of rea-

AUG. 26, 2004: RCMP arrest two men after discovering more than 6,700 marijuana plants on the top of Vancouver Island.

OCT. 5, 2004: The Mounties arrest 10 Haitian people after finding 4,380 plants in 15 different cities.

DEC. 2, 2004: Winnipeg police bust the country's second-largest grow op: more than 14,000 plants worth \$11 million, housed in a warehouse located just blocks from police headquarters. On Dec. 3, they raid a home containing 1,225 plants worth nearly \$1 million. On Dec. 16, they seize 549 plants worth nearly \$615,000 from another residence.

DEC. 16, 2004: Edmonton police arrest four people after raiding two grow ops worth more than \$1.5 million. In all, Edmonton police raided 75 area homes in 2004.

FEB. 5, 2005: Calgary police seize an estimated \$4 million worth of marijuana plants from three separate locations.

COMPILED BY MICHAEL SWARTZ

sonable: weak police and politicians were determined to make marijuana the villain behind Rossini's rampage. And that leaves behind shaking his head. "I'm not convinced that marijuana was at the heart of why these people were killed. But life was, then that's the tragedy," Diagne-Ocaspe says. "No Canadian should ever lose his or her life over marijuana. It's just not that important a substance."

stiffen promises for growers. Courts, however, seem to impose increasing penalties. Almost 60 per cent of convicted growers in B.C. received either jail time or a fine, according to sentencing statistics between 2002 and 2004. In Vancouver, 63 per cent escaped with only probation or a conditional sentence served at home.

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association, an advocate for decriminalization, called it "opportunistic, illogical and hysterical" to step up the war on drugs after last week's killings. "Make no mistake," said association president John Rossini. "It is the prohibition of marijuana that caused this tragedy."

KEVIN MACQUEEN

HEART OF DARKNESS

In Mayerthorpe, residents struggle with the legacy of the angry man who brought them sudden notoriety

IT'S THE STUFF OF FICTION, a Hollywood movie drama played out in the most unlikely of settings. A mid-gest badly away as a boxer with a grudge opens fire on police officers who have stalked out his farm. By the time the shooting stops, four young policemen lie dead, and does the gunman, a figure so notorious in his home community that his own father had long ago severed all ties and now denounces his son as "a wicked devil."

Also, for the 1,600 residents of Mayerthorpe, Alta., this was no afternoon at the Rialto

By the time the bullet from James Rossini's seventh rifle had taken their deadly toll, Mayerthorpe, neighbouring Whitecourt and the farms and villages in between were shrouded in an unrelenting spotlight. As television cameras and tape recorders clicked on, area residents poured forth their grief, outrage and bewilderment. How could such a horrific crime occur here, in the sleepy foothills of central Alberta?

Like so many Canadian small towns, Mayerthorpe gives every appearance of being the land of placid innocence in order to get away from the violence and drug centres. At this time of year, social life in Mayerthorpe revolves around the local hockey and curling rinks, or friendly card games at your neighbour's kitchen table. Conversely, the community's collective passion is the rodeo. Brothers Rod and DeWay Hys, both Canadian champions and die-hard cowboys, are local icons (DeWay also won gold at the 2002 Winter Olympics rodeo).

Research by local media, though, tells a less rosy tale. As with so many other rural communities, the Mayerthorpe area has struggled lately with a mix of economic problems and the often-bellows in its



Michael Roberts

has, by choice, spent most of his life being and teaching in smaller centres. He speaks glowingly of the casual friendships of place. Like Mayerthorpe, where people watch out for one another. But there's always a darker side. "Prior to being a principal, I was a counsellor," says Jordan. "So I see things some other people don't. In every community I've worked in, there's been tragedy. It is safe, more comfortable and more personable. But there are people with difficulties no matter where you go."

In the words of a "people with difficulties" the man at the centre of last week's riot

scene stands apart. The second youngest of eight children, James Rossini, 46, had been a public enemy since his teens. For most friends and most best of his estranged family speak of him

"HOW DO you predict when someone will snap? I think all communities have their rogue people."

BLAME IT ON 'PROHIBITION'

FOR SOME READERS OF Canadian Culture Magazine, the Vancouver-based international journal for pot smokers and growers, the deaths of four RCMP officers was a footnote of another sort. "For anyone that grows their own, this is a total tragedy," said one contributor to the magazine's online forum. "But they'll start sending the army in now." Another went so far as to call James Rossini, the dead gunman, a martyr. "I will pray for him for every day of the rest of my life."

Such inflammatory responses were the minority, even on a site not noted for sympathy toward police. "We are all victims together in this drug war, including the families of the people who died today," wrote someone under the pseudonym Sinusium. "The law is the enemy of bad people, our enemy because it threatens just for us, and the enemy of the police who are forced to enforce the law to uphold it." Some said the deaths will hasten the cause of legalization, others that they prove the futility of law. "The message is worth more than the weight



in gold is because of prohibition, this makes prohibition look bad," wrote one.

Those who have shaken many British Columbian who, to the frustration of police, often take a benign view of an industry calculated to generate more than \$6 billion a year in the province. The number of B.C. grow ops is estimated at 15,000—ranging from residential-scale operations to export-oriented gang-run colonies. Provincial Solicitor General Rob Coleman, a former RCMP member, urged the federal government to



An air ambulance arrives at the crime scene near Buchfort Bridge after Rosko's rampage.

was a lot of talk about the randomness of Rosko's crime. "How do you predict when someone will snap?" asks Mayerthorpe Mayor Albert Schales. "This was obviously a very disturbed individual. I think all communities have their rogue people."

"I HOPE he rots in hell for what he's done to our community," one woman told reporters. "He ruined our town."

While that's undoubtedly true, there are those who say Rosko is not so unique. David Barker, owner of La Ferme Anne County, which encompasses Mayerthorpe, sees the gunman as part of a cultural phenomenon. "I think there are a number of people in rural Alberta," says Barker, "who act as if they were living in a B-grade Western movie and that it's still a viable possibility to settle

their conflicts with guns." Barker adds that he's seen people at county meetings "who get angry over contracts about gravel development or risks. Do you talk coming near their places and who actually wear public threats." As for Rosko, Barker says, "He's been roaming at times, and someone we have more than once speculated about being a real threat. I hadn't realized until this happened the number of times the RCMP had run-ins with him. Which is what makes it hard to understand why they wouldn't have been more aware of the possible risks involved."

That, of course, will be a central issue in the days and weeks ahead as the RCMP investigation into the final raid unfolds. But while such questions are pressing, for the residents of Mayerthorpe the more immediate task is to bury and honour their fallen protectors and try to live with the burden of sudden mortality. "I know," says the town's mayor, "that, for years from now, when people drive by Mayerthorpe, they will say, 'That's the place where all those policemen died.' But we can't dwell on that. It's part of our legacy now and we just have to go on."

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Neurosurgeon Ziya Gokulan specializes in removing the most complex spinal tumors.

Removing Inaccessible Spinal Tumors

The patient's tumor is the uppermost region of the cervical spine near the base of his skull couldn't have been more inaccessible. To get at it, surgeons normally would have approached through the mouth or neck and even then would have been able to remove only part of the mass. "We would have taken it out

as best we could and then relied on radiation therapy to take care of what we left behind," explains **Ziya Gokulan**, a neurosurgeon who specializes in these most complex of all spinal tumor cases. "Historically, these patients did rather poorly."

But now this man has much better odds as he benefits from a method for

reaching these hard-to-get tumors developed by Gokulan himself. To call the operation complex is an understatement. Gokulan must employ techniques requiring the most extraordinary finesse: One slip could injure the nerves on each side of the spine or the vertebral arteries that supply blood to the brain stem, which controls breathing and heart rate. One of the vertebral arteries also is irradiated by tumor and will need to be removed. A single nick to the other artery would be fatal. "We'll never take the part of the artery that's within the tumor itself unless we're 100 percent certain the other vertebral artery is fine," Gokulan explains.

Finally, to remove the part of the tumor in front of the spine, Gokulan must remove cervical bones that leave the patient's head destabilized, literally flopping to the side, but that too is correctable. Gokulan uses a cylindrical steel cage filled with a cadaveric bone matrix to help fuse the new cervical spine.

The most satisfying aspect of the new surgery, Gokulan says, is that patients with spinal tumors that used to be inaccessible have gained a second chance. ☐

Rebuilding the Face After Cancer Surgery

Hopkins surgeons are using new materials and surgical techniques to reconstruct the faces of patients who have been disfigured by cancer. Using three-dimensional CT, for example, facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon **Patrick Byrne**, of Hopkins' Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery, creates a plastic polymer model of a patient's skull. Using the model in the operating room, he can see the exact topography of the patient's facial bone and cartilage beneath facial tissues. This gives him precise landmarks to work with when performing micro-vascular surgery to take bone, muscle and skin from one area of the body to fill in the facial defect.

"The model gives us a much more accurate idea of the kind of defect we're dealing with," Byrne says. "It also allows us to select the best bone graft to use in restoring the face."

New materials are making a difference, too. Because the risk of cancer returning is high, most surgeons would wait a year before rebuilding the nasal aqueduct with rib grafts. Byrne, however, can do the surgery much earlier using a new type of polymer plastic that dissolves in 12 to 18 months. By leaving the polymer sheath and modeling it into the shape of the patient's natural aqueduct, he reconstructs it while doctors monitor and treat any cancer spread. He then attaches bone chips which slowly bond and replace the sheath as it is absorbed by the body. To feed blood supply to the bone grafts, he uses a new technique to tunnel forehead muscle beneath the skin to the inside of the nose.

His approach, Byrne adds, allows the patient to undergo a full course of



Using a polymer model of the patient's skull, surgeon Patrick Byrne is able to visualize and design structures he normally would not see in the operating room.

radiation therapy, reducing the risk of cancer recurrence while preserving appearance. "If we don't reconstruct during the initial surgery, the patient is left with a severe deformity for a year," Byrne says. "That is pretty tough to go through." ☐

A Novel, Nerve-Sparing Prostate Procedure

Johns Hopkins' reputation as a center of excellence in prostate cancer is well-known. Under the leadership of **Patrick Walsh, M.D.**, the Brady Urological Institute has been at the center of key advances in the diagnosis and treatment of this disease. Continuing this pioneering tradition, surgeons have now refined a minimally-invasive version of the radical prostatectomy that Walsh developed decades ago.

The laparoscopic radical prostatectomy—popularized by surgeons in

France in 2000—follows the same principles as Walsh's open operation but accesses the cancerous prostate gland through five small incisions rather than a large cut in the abdomen, explains urologist **Li-Ming Su**. Using laparoscopic instruments, the surgeon delicately dissects tissues around the prostate. A miniature video camera fed through one of the incisions allows him to see—even more clearly than in an open operation. With that orbited visualization, Su and fellow surgeon Christian

Pavlovich mirror the steps of the open procedure, including measures to preserve potency.

Su and Pavlovich have completed over 400 cases to date. In an analysis of the first 120 cases, 79% of patients reported they were completely continent after six months. In terms of sexual function, 60% of patients who were potent prior to surgery whose nerve bundles were spared reported erections adequate for intercourse at six months after surgery, and 76% at 12 months. ☐

The Cosmetic Center: A Marriage of Specialties

It is not uncommon to find cosmetic centers that merge dermatologists with plastic surgeons and feature everything from Botox to breast augmentation. Digging deep into its academic resources, Johns Hopkins has taken this concept a serious, significant step forward. Not only has its new Cosmetic Center wedded dermatology and plastic surgery, but it has also brought interventional radiology, ophthalmology, oncology and vascular surgery into the marriage.

"We realized that patients wanted a more holistic, multidisciplinary approach to their cosmetic con-

cerns," says dermatologist **Patrick McEliggett, M.D.**, director of the center located at Hopkins' beautiful suburban outpatient facility, Johns Hopkins at Green Spring Station. "So we decided to give them the whole gamut—a variety of physicians with different skills so that they could receive the best possible care."

The key, McEliggett adds, is that care at the Center is offered in the highly conservative manner Hopkins is known for. The latest technologies are also employed, including minimally-invasive laser and light procedures designed to heal the skin without disrupting

it—a major aim of the center. "We can go after lesions beneath the skin without leaving visible damage, so patients can continue their normal social activities between treatments," McEliggett says.

And because the physicians at the Cosmetic Center are academically oriented, they continue to pursue research that may lead to new, even more effective treatments for skin disorders. The push in the field, McEliggett explains, is to go deep and explore cellular mechanisms beneath the skin, in hopes of developing less-invasive interventions. ☐

Shrinking Fibroids, Preserving the Uterus

Three years ago, Erin Bailey, a 36-year-old home entrepreneur, thought her active outdoor life might be coming to an end. Profuse uterine bleeding was forcing her to dash hourly to the bathroom for 20 days each month. At night, she would awaken with painful pressure on her bladder. Exhausted,



International radiologist Kevin Kim performs fibroid embolization to preserve the uterus.

Fibroids without destroying the uterus. After Kim administered conscious sedation (similar to the kind used in wisdom teeth extraction), he makes a 1-cm incision into the groin. A catheter is then threaded into the uterine artery that supplies blood to the fibroids, and calibrated microphones (tiny spongy beads) are injected into the artery, plugging the vessels that feed the fibroids. Deprived of blood and needed oxygen, the growths die and shrink.

"The uterus remains viable because we cut off the blood supply only to the enlarged recruited vessels to fibroids, sparing the remainder of the uterine blood vessels," Kim explains. The procedure takes less than 45 minutes and has been effective in over 90% of patients. He's now performing 10 to 20 fibroid embolizations a month.

After the operation, Bailey missed a week of work, but only because of the physical demands of her job, she says. Two years later, Bailey reports, she feels great. "Now I'm running to the bathroom for a good reason—the progesterone." ☐

ABOUT JOHNS HOPKINS

Johns Hopkins Medicine International is dedicated to extending the Hopkins mission in patient care, medical research and education around the world. We do this by assisting patients from abroad who seek medical care from our doctors; by sharing knowledge and educating international healthcare professionals; and by collaborating with governments and organizations interested in improving the quality of healthcare delivery in their countries. Johns Hopkins currently operates programs, affiliations and other types of collaborations in Singapore, Turkey, Panama, Lebanon and China.

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Interventional Radiology: Changing the Way Surgery is Done

Part of the ongoing revolution in imaging, interventional radiology uses imaging techniques to guide catheters and coils inside the body to open obstructed vessels, drain accumulated fluids or stop internal bleeding. These minimally invasive procedures use small incisions, which translates into shorter hospital stays, a faster

recovery and less pain for the patient.

J.F. Geschwind, M.D., Director of Cardiovascular and Interventional Radiology at Hopkins, is at the forefront of this change. In the last few years, he has helped refine a treatment for advanced liver cancer called chemoembolization. The catheter-driven treatment kills liver tumors

by delivering chemotherapeutic drugs directly to the tumor site.

According to Geschwind, the areas that have seen the most change are venous diseases, which include varicose veins and chronic venous insufficiency, specifically fibrotic disease, and oncology. Many of these new procedures can be done on an outpatient basis. ☐



THE RURAL JUNGLE

Grow ops, drug labs and substance abuse have made small-town streets just as mean as urban ones

MAYBE IT'S TIME to update our national myths. The killing of four RCMP officers near Maynooth, Alta., last week, makes painfully obvious what many of us have tried to ignore: Canada's small towns long ago graduated to big-city problems.

No body keeps comprehensive statistics on crime in the less populated corners of the country, but the statistical evidence fills the pages of local newspapers. A police raid on a farm near Cremona, Alta., last month, that uncovered a lab and 30 kg of crystal methamphetamine. A bust by Stettin, Man., RCMP that netted 32 kilos of pot and \$65,000 in cash. A house fire in St. James of Vanhuysen, Que., that led to the discovery of an

under grow up with 12,000 plants. "Drugs permeate every corner of our society," says Chief Edgar MacLeod of the Cape Breton Regional Police Service. "The single fact is that the impact of drugs on quality of life, on families, communities and neighborhoods, is the same regardless of where it happens." In the wake of the Alberta slayings, the organization he leads, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, is moving its call for a comprehensive national anti-drug strategy. Police in the country's smaller

communities and rural areas are in desperate need of help, says MacLeod. He cites the example of his own force, which has recently been struggling with an epidemic of prescription drug

abuse, primarily the highly addictive painkiller OxyContin. "People have trouble accepting the fact that it's happening in their communities," says MacLeod. "They take a lot of pride in where they live, and there's a sense of embarrassment. The first challenge is just getting people to talk about it."

Bruce Whitmore, chairman of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' public safety and crime prevention committee, says marijuana grow ops and drug labs are becoming more and more prevalent in rural areas as police in large cities crack down. "There's a perception that the risks are less significant in the country," says Whitmore, a Kitchener, Ont., city councillor. "It's tougher to detect them. Police don't have the resources." Wagonia Blue Mayerthorpe are bound to be repaired, he says, and governments and the courts take action. The federation is calling for new measures concerning guidelines that would see the owners of grow ops and labs handled hard time rather than fines or probation.

Communities across the country are struggling to catch up the new realities. In Kootenai, in northwest Ontario, police and school officials launched a public education campaign last fall after discovering that crystal meth was starting to show up at their schools. Alan Wray, a school principal, organized public rallies to inform parents and students of the danger. "This stuff is strong enough that one or two uses, you're addicted," he says. "So we let people know what it looks like, how people behave once they start taking it." It hasn't stopped the spread of meth—two students at the high school went into treatment in October—but it has slowed it. Why believe it?

It last month, you had asked Rod Mann field, the Casselman MP whose Yellow head riding includes Maynooth, about the biggest problem facing his constituents, he not would have said crystal meth. "It just makes an absolute shipwreck of lives," he says. But the slayings of the four officers prove that the issue is bigger than one drug or one community. "In places like this, it's out of sight and out of mind," says Mann field. "The RCMP are stretched to the max, there's a lack of resources. I believe it's more prevalent than many in our communities even understand or know." Given the extent of last week, that might finally change. Ignorance is no longer an option. ☐

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ON GUARD FOR THEM

KEN MACQUEEN reports from HMCS Algonquin on the state of our coastal defence

"Where will the next shock come from? It may again descend from the sea, but it is just as likely to come from the sea. Perhaps from a container, given that only a small percentage of containers are searched at U.S. or Canadian ports. Or, through the loading of a commercial vessel. Or, loaded onto small vessels, the kind that smugglers have used successfully for centuries to introduce remote areas and the neglected smaller parts that dot Canada's coasts."

—October 2003 Canada's Senate Committee on National Security and Defence considers the next serious strike on North America

CANADA HAS almost 250,000 km of coast, some 11 million sq. km of ocean territory—and a defence capability that offers little comfort to its closest neighbour and ally. Reversing this perception has become a belated federal priority, which may explain why a handful of deaths of ships with big guns changed the waters off the West Coast the very February day federal Finance Minister Ralph Goodale boosted defence spending in the Liberal government's budget. The potential influx of illegal immigrants, smugglers and extremists is not just a domestic concern. Since the terror strikes of Sept. 11, 2001, no one even so proleptically asked the defence of Canada as does the United States of America.

Progress, from the American point of view, has been uneven. Most recently, Canada refused to sign on to the U.S. ballistic missile defence system. Still, the Liberals did boost military spending by \$12.8 billion over five years. Proof, Prime Minister Paul Martin says, of a commitment to North American security. But Washington is skeptical. Paul Cellucci, the Bush administration's outspoken ambassador to Canada, is ending his tenure in Ottawa much as it began, by remarking on a lack of faith in Canada's ability to guard the top part of the continent from terrorist incursions.

The Canadian way's motto being "Ready Aye Ready," there were no such doubts aboard HMCS Algonquin on budget day as it ripped across Juan de Fuca Strait at 25 knots in dry weather and full sea. "There's no question in my mind I have what I need to do the job," said the destroyer's commanding officer, Capt. Ron Lloyd, taking part in a Canada-U.S. security exercise known

as Sea Breeze. The navy is playing an increasing role off Canada's coast. Lloyd says he's acquired tracking and boarding hostile vessels during two tours as captain in the Persian Gulf seven miles in his own backyard. As he spoke, the ship closed in on a vessel of unknown—the officer's role in this exercise played by the Canadian Coast Guard ship the Wilfred Laurier. Below decks, Algonquin's classrooms-sized operations room was lit with the eerie glow of computer screens as crew tracked one of the destroyer's broken waterways, coordinated communications, and acted in command centre for part of the four-day exercise.

As military manoeuvres go, Sea Breeze produced the requisite level of mayhem. Flagship ships were intercepted and boarded. A fire aboard a tug boat produced a dozen casualties. Fifteen illegal boats were junked off a ship before they hit Canadian soil. A cruise ship was held hostage by terrorists equipped with high explosives.

It's a scary new world. Containing such chaos requires unprecedented levels of domestic and bilateral co-operation. The new enemy has no face or flag. "We need to move beyond the paradigm of defeating Canada against the bad guys," says Gen. Dieter Hoenes, part of the team that spent months planning Sea Breeze. "We are preserving Canadian sovereignty, in all its means." The navy's lead role meant coordinating a bureaucracy's power of Rebel: dozens of RCMP emergency response teams considered in their own fleets



Standing guard on Algonquin during Sea Breeze off Vancouver's port.



of high speed infiltrators and exfiltrators, the marine reinforcement units of the year-old Canada Border Services Agency, the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada, and two corners of the U.S. Coast Guard, responsible for patrolling U.S. coastal waters and ports. Remarkably, the exercise was the first involving all agencies watching the coast. Lessons were learned, communications glitches overcome and, yes, the cruise ship was saved. "Like any movie," said Lloyd, after Algonquin returned to CFB Esquimalt, its home port outside Victoria, "the good guys win."

In the real world, of course, bad guys don't follow the script. Maybe they attack one of the vessels of the Washington state or B.C. ferry systems. Maybe they hole a sail tanker sailing south with Alaskan trade. Or they hide a dirty nuclear device or chemical weapon in one of millions of containers that freighters carry into Halifax, or up the Juan de Fuca Strait—the waterway between Vancouver Island and Washington state that feeds the ports of Vancouver, Seattle and Tacoma.

Sen. Colin Kenny, chairman of the Senate national security and defence committee, can compare up scary stuff with accuracy—the collective nightmares of security experts, compiled in the committee's scathing report on maritime defence. Not enough has changed in the 16 months since release, he says. The reality is still summarised in the report's title—"Canada's Coast Lines: The Longest Under Defended Border in the World."

His committee went in Esquimalt and Vancouver last week for follow-up meetings at the base and Vancouver's port. Canadian complacency, he says, stems from a long-held view that the military has no force to deploy in remote lands for distant conflicts. "Typically, Canadians haven't felt very threatened in a long time," Kenny says. "Big ocean on the left, big ocean on the right, snow to the north, friends and the south. What, me worry?"

The real foe, he says, doesn't even need to be the target to be disastrous economically. All it takes is a deadly container piling through Vancouver to risk havoc on the U.S.—"If, through bad luck or bad planning or a lack of resources, that did happen," says Kenny. "Vancouver harbour would be shut

down for a long, long time. The economy in B.C. would be in terrible shape." And yet, the committee found that just three per cent of containers arriving in Canada are inspected. As dismal as that rate is, it's twice the rate the U.S. is inspecting.

Attention has focused mostly in domestic security, as anyone arriving at a U.S. airport or border crossing couldn't fail to notice. It's also bolstering at Coast Guard, which, unlike Canada's, has a military mandate to guard the coast. It is acquiring new vessels, and adding 5,000 staff, and has stepped up patrols. None of this has eased the overarching sense of vulnerability Americans feel since 9/11. The air attacks prompted a hard look at other areas of weakness, says Coast Guard Rear Admiral Jeffrey Garrett, commander of the Seattle-based district that patrols the Pacific Northwest. "It certainly brought into focus the fact that our maritime borders were pretty much undefended." They will not be underfunded, he says, much as the Canadian Senate committee contends. He cites the Sea Breeze exercise as welcome evidence that both nations now recognize that their security needs are as intertwined as their economies.

Canada has made strides in coastal surveillance. A national security policy released last spring mandated increased co-operation among Canadian maritime agencies and with the U.S. Two long-range radar stations, capable of tracking

shipping up to 200 nautical miles out, are in the timing phase at the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Taking shape is a series of new detection network CFB Esquimalt's new Maritime Security Operations Centre, meant to combine every surveillance asset Canada has on the West Coast. A similar centre in Halifax monitors East Coast traffic. By this winter, the navy will share space and information with Transport Canada, the RCMP, the Canadian Border Services Agency, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard. "Collectively, we can paint a far more accurate marine picture than we can individually," says navy Cmdr. A. Jones, who heads the centre. It's a daunting prospect. The computer screens tracking Juan de Fuca Strait are live with

IT'S A scary new world, requiring unprecedented levels of co-operation. The new enemy has no face or flag.

doeds of vessels, freighters, ferries, barges, tugs, tankers, pleasure craft and cruise ships. Hironaka, his naval colleague, takes the waterway to the vital and vulnerable heart of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf. "You look at the value of it and you realize, as a choke point, it is inescapable."

Kenny wants the government to move beyond theoretical exercises. The committee recommends a more substantial role for Canada's "frontline" Coast Guard, surveillance of the Great Lakes—"the soft underbelly of Canadian coastal defence"—and a public inquiry into port security.

A commercial helicopter flight from Victoria to Vancouver explores the reality of Canada's big port cities on any given day. Nine freighters at anchor in the approach to Burrard Inlet, waiting to unload. The downtown cruise ship terminal, surrounded by business towers, condos and hotels, glows in the evening light, ready for the first ships of spring.

They just didn't realize it in the Persian Gulf when they left home.



Scale it, huge orange cranes stack long rows of shipping containers, the building blocks of the provincial economy.

A day earlier, back in Esquimalt, Barry McNeil, director of the Canada Border Ser-

vices Agency for the West Coast and Yukon District, considered all those containers—and the trouble they could conceal. "What can you ship in a container?" he asked with a cheerful shrug. "Just about everything."

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GHOSTS THAT CAN'T BE SWEEP AWAY

Phnom Penh is a beautiful city, but its ugly past is impossible to ignore, writes STEVE BURGESS

DRIVING DOWN the broad boulevards of Phnom Penh, what impresses you first is their relative cleanliness. After three weeks in Vietnam, I have just come up the Mekong River by swift boat, and remark to the taxi driver about the streets, so much tidier than

any in the now vanishing neighbouring country. "Yes," he says. "It's the NGOs. They started a project to keep the dust down."

Phnom Penh's self-styled NGO Town. The next admission that these charitable, neo-governmental organizations play a large role here comes when I check into my hotel room. The phone directory, usually a compilation of *petits* joints, in this case lists phone numbers of prominent NGOs. Just in case I get a late-night craving for aid money.

International aid groups set up shop here not long after the end of that genocidal chaos, Pol Pot. So numerous are the aid workers that there is almost a separate economy for them. At a spiffy internet design shop called I Cling, an employee named Gail tells me demand is steady. "It's

not local people," she explained. "It's all foreigners."

Phnom Penh is a frequently bewitched city with great food and intoxicating markets. These who don't remember history are condemned to a pleasant visit. But good luck ignoring the past—it's a hole too deep.

Recent reports from various distressed areas in Asia indicate that efforts to renew countries are running into ghost trouble, places like the Indonesian Islands are dealing with the very real fears of locals that the area is now haunted. Imagine, then, the burden that lies on Phnom Penh, once the quaternary ghost town. Nearly erased by the ideological madness of the Khmer Rouge, who sent its residents to the twenty-side where some would work and many would be murdered, it has spent the past three decades recovering from the grave.

These streets, so lively today, were once the

bones of a dead city. In some ways, it remains a spooky place—Phnom Penh gives the impression that it still waits for the ending. "I cried the first time I saw a stop sign," says Alta, a South African attached to a Christian NGO. "And I cried the first time I heard an ambulance. It was development."

She has noted remarkable change in her eight years here—the re-opening of a street, more paved streets, the disappearance of the curfew after a 1997 coup that restored some stability. She gives NGOs more of the credit, and more to the Khmer people themselves. "I have seen how determined they are," Alta says. "When it comes to things like learning English, they are very eager."

But she also notes Phnom Penh residents tell me that the nervousness is always close to the surface. Cambodia is experiencing some political turmoil these days—opposition leader Sam Rainsy recently fled the country after facing defamation charges from the government. After the fall of the Khmer Rouge years you'd expect due to feel minor. Not so. "People get worried very easily," says Morn, a vendor in Phnom Penh's Taol. "Even Prong market. They are always afraid we will go back to the old days."

Today, Phnom Penh works as both a city and a symbol. The flood of NGOs is an interesting example of those, when a crisis or mass murder, help usually arrives after the fact. Reminders of past atrocities are available at the Genocide Museum. Located on the site of a former Khmer Rouge prison, a museum compound with a lovely courtyard. The exhibits are expertly presented—rows of piled skulls, rows of unidentified photos taken at the prison—a small sampling of the 20,000 who died here, that number still has a fraction of the two million murdered souls.

My guide is a woman named Ling. She shows the exhibits and memorials and provides a personal perspective of the prison conditions. At 22, she is old enough to have lived through that era. "My father, sister and brother were killed," she says. "My mother, my sister and I escaped to Vietnam when I was young. I try to forget everything."

Making that more difficult is the fact that so many of the killers, including the late Pol Pot himself, escaped justice. Cambodia's ghosts live in a disconcerting habit of popping up alive, even at the museum. "Some Khmer Rouge come here," Ling says. "They talk about what happened here. I think they are sorry. I don't know."

Charitable agencies sponsored a clean-up campaign in Cambodia's capital



GIVING PEACE A CHANCE

The seeds of democracy may be taking root in the Middle East

ARE GEORGE W. BUSH'S Mideast dominos beginning to fall? Supporters of the U.S. President's drive to democratize the region—by persuasion or force—have had their pick of progressive examples over the past few weeks. The Palestinians, under the leadership of Mahoud Abbas, continue to inch closer to peace with the Israelis—despite recent terrorist bombings. On the heels of a successful vote in Iraq, Saudi Arabia is holding unprecedented local council elections—although only men are able to run or can be elected. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt has raised hopes of substantive change by saying he'll allow others to run against him in a vote later this year. And in Lebanon, a popular uprising—inconspicuously known as the Intifada for Independence in Beirut, and the Cedar Revolution in Washington—last week forced the resignation of the Syrian-backed government of Prime Minister Omar Khariri.

Facing international pressure, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad is publicly musing about ending his country's longstanding military occupation of Lebanon. In an attempt to make nice, he even handed over a key member of Saddam Hussein's regime to the interim Iraqi government. Bush and his advisors are clearly looking to their successes. "The world is speaking with one voice when it comes to making sure that democracy has a chance to flourish in Lebanon," the President said in a speech at a Maryland college—a claim of unity he hasn't often been able to make about U.S. foreign policy.

Still, chaos is never far in the region. In the same week, a car bomb in Habb, south of Baghdad, killed at least 125 and wounded more than 100—the worst attack of the war. Sectarian wrangling continues to delay the formation of a government, and the national state of emergency has been extended. U.S. deaths in Iraq have now topped 1,300—more than 1,300 of them since Bush declared an end to major combat. Fostering democracy on the Middle East is one thing, but making it take root is an extremely difficult challenge. **BT**

Lebanon's popular uprising is one of several progressive political developments since the Iraqi election last month.

FREEDOM FROM WANT

A staunch UN High Commissioner calls for enforcing human rights in Canada.



Louise Arbour has a lifelong reputation for challenging authority in the pursuit of justice. She was fearless as prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, and more regularly challenges world leaders as UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. In between these two jobs, she sat on the Supreme Court of Canada, where she had time to consider the true meaning of human rights—the subject of her lecture in the sixth annual LaFontaine-Baldwin symposium. Named after two pre-Confederation leaders who helped establish the Canadian democratic framework, the symposium is sponsored by the Desautels Institute and the Excellency John Robins Fund. Edited excerpts from Arbour's speech, delivered March 4 in Quebec City:

DURING THE 1990s, as a nation we were quick to celebrate our No. 1 ranking on the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index. The index—reflecting indicators including life expectancy at birth, literacy and gross domestic product—gives an snapshot of well-being at an aggregate level. It's a long way, however, from reflecting the experience of a country's most vulnerable citizens.

Despite our international standing, it is evident that poverty and gross inequalities persist on our own backyard. Other reports, studies and auditors, from home and abroad, reveal that First Peoples, single-parent families headed by women, persons with disabilities and many other groups con-

front face conditions that threaten to a denial of economic, social, civil, political and cultural human rights, the bedrocks of all human beings under international law.

How can such glaring disparities prevail in a country such as this, a wealthy, culturally diverse, cosmopolitan democracy? For its own part, Canada has consistently per-

CANADIANS
believe that equitable
access to our riches
is no longer a matter of
charitable disposition

The judiciary has been reluctant to protect vulnerable segments of the population

ceived itself as an active promoter and defender of international human rights, and has—no doubt—displayed a strong commitment to multilateral approaches to global problems. It is a commitment which has come to be a matter of national identity.

But what about human rights at home? I want to ask, perhaps somewhat provocatively, if we have done everything within our power to give our values and our international legal commitments effect in our day-to-day life as a nation.

The story of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, embodying the universal and enshrining necessary for a life with dignity, is in great parts Canadian one, although it is not exactly the story we might expect. Many have noted that the task of drafting the declaration fell to Canadian John Humphrey, director of the human rights division of the secretariat of the UN Commission on Human Rights. Less visible is what took place at a political level.

Leslie R. Pearson was an equally noted proponent in the story of the declaration, perhaps hardly surprising in view of the social policy developments that took place during the 1950 and 1960s under his watch, among them the introduction of the Canada Pension Plan and universal health care. Pearson's imprint in 1948 as a newly appointed secretary of state for external affairs, however, included an embarrassing abstention on a critical UN vote on the declaration. While, ultimately, Canada did vote in favour of the declaration, in the words of Professor William Schabas of the Irish Centre for Human Rights in Galway, the initial abstention "left a scar that 50 years have not erased."

The reason for the abstention related very directly to disagreements in official circles as to the inclusion of socio-economic rights. It was very clear that Prime Minister Louis

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NEW MENTOS SUGARFREE



SAVE YOUR MOUTH FOR MENTOS

St. Laurent was under pressure from conservative forces, including members of the Canadian Bar Association. Pearson's stance meant to the General Assembly on Dec. 10, 1948, was met accordingly, albeit with little, challenging the "improvised" nature of the language used in the draft declaration and noting jurisdictional concerns. Solbuske asserts quite pointedly that, "The Canadian government, and the department of foreign affairs in particular, misled both domestic and international public opinion by concealing its substantive opposition to the declaration behind procedural arguments."

For whatever one might say about contemporary challenges, it is well worth remembering that the early to mid-20th century had its own complexities and was not a bygone era of co-operation and solidarity in Canada. Social transformation has demanded political consciousness, generated by the work of Canadians, individually and together, who have worked for their ideas, who hold politicians to account and who defend principles wherever they are, from the kitchen table to the international stage. While we've seen some notable advances in the recognition of social and economic rights in Canada over the decades, the unwelcome echoes of Pearson's words in the UN General Assembly still reverberate within our political and legal cultures, part of an enduring reluctance to give effect to economic, social and cultural rights.

In our more recent history, the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 held the potential to change the relationship among executive, legislative and judiciary, opening up the possibility for an articulation of the right-based component of public policy decisions. Section 7, guaranteeing the right "to life, liberty and security of the person," is particularly relevant in the context of the UN declaration's "freedom from want." Political scientists and legal scholars watched the courts to see what would be the impact of judicial review in public policy decisions.

The first two decades of Charter litigation testify to a conservatism—both on the part of litigants and the courts—to rattle head-on the claims emerging from the right to better lives from want. Canadian courts have championed civil and political rights and have articulated for themselves an appropriately cautious sphere of judicial review when the state invokes the use of repressive



Pierre Trudeau, right, presiding over the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

criminal law powers. But considerable abolitionist resistance has been expressed

in relation to social, economic and cultural rights and the protection of vulnerable segments of the population on grounds other than discrimination.

Courts the world over have been playing an increasingly vital role in enforcing socio-economic rights, bringing them from the realm of charity to the realm of justice. All rights are so the unfairly and uniquely "costly" nature of socio-economic rights obligations seems at best strange or misinformed, or worse, discriminatory, as against these realities. Furthermore, the legacy of judicial review of all human rights is not open to question under the Canadian constitutional system. Courts are well equipped to reflect the entrenched expectation of Canadians that equitable access to the

riches generated by our collective harvesting of this generous land is no longer a matter of charitable disposition.

The possibility for people to claim their human rights confidences through legal processes is essential so that human rights have meaning for those who are the margins. There will always be a place for charity, but charitable responses are not an effective, principled or sustainable solution for enforceable human rights guarantees.

The debate in Canada on these issues can be certain to continue. However, those few who object to the notion of human rights that I've outlined would do well to bring the true nature of their misgivings into the open, not from the shadows of some men and calculated obfuscation. With good faith engagement on the substantive issues, I believe that there will be every prospect of a more just, inclusive and rights-respecting democracy in Canada as years to come. ■

THE MATCHMAKER

Behind the scenes, Madhav Das Nalapat is transforming diplomacy. CLEO PASKAL reports.

WHILE CHINA is hogging the headlines, the other billion-plus Asian giant is quietly making friends and influencing economies. Once sleepy India has slowly changed in the last decade as it begins the process of joining up with the global marketplace. Its economy is opening up, it is a declared nuclear power, its software and biotech industries are booming, and it is increasingly being seen as a safe economic alternative to China. But India's new diplomatic initiatives are also leading to some dramatic shifts in the global balance of power, and a case in point is the evolving relationship, watched over by a mysterious

brockroom matchmaker, between India and the United States and Israel.

Ties were once strained because of the Cold War. India was close to the Soviet Union, Israel and the U.S. were allies (until 1992, the Jewish state was not even allowed to set up an embassy in India). "Waiting, such enduring coolness toward New Delhi after the collapse of the Soviet Union didn't help. But there were individuals who saw the need for closer relations. Among them was Martin Sherman, a Jew and a political science at Tel Aviv University. He recalls being at a conference in New Delhi, in 1994, just after the Indians had exploded their first nuclear device.

"The American ambassador for non-proliferation and I were the only non-Indians attending," Sherman says. "He was very hard on the Indians. I just applied the basic

HIS influence can be seen in India's post-Cold War relationship not only with the United States, but also with Israel

principles of balance of power and profitability of the Indian sector." In other words, the increasing geopolitical weight of India could be used to advantage by the West, even as the country's growing middle class was becoming a discernible market.

In Sherman's eyes, Israel and India had much in common. Both were concerned with Islamic fundamentalism, both were developing high-tech economies, and both were democracies among autocratic states. But in part because of the Cold War past, it was difficult to bring the two countries together, and also warm relations between New Delhi and Washington. Enter the

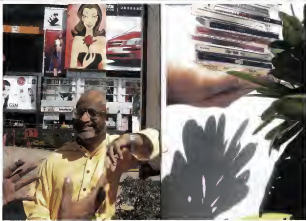
matchmaker: Madhav Das Nalapat.

Formerly the editor of the *Times of India*, and now professor of geopolitics at Manipal Academy of Higher Education (an elite private university in southern India), Nalapat has no formal role in government, although he influences policy at the highest levels. During the days when India was frozen in the Cold War block, there was not much attention being paid to his view that closer economic ties with the U.S. would be better than ties with the U.S.S.R. But in 1991, one of his mentees, P. V. Narasimha Rao, took over as prime minister and put together an informal "kitchen cabinet," including Nalapat, to develop new ideas on economics and national security.

Nalapat knew, as he now recalls, that "the only countries that made rapid economic progress in the 1980s were those friendly to

the U.S." But with the U.S. and Indian foreign policy establishments still allergic to each other, an individual was needed. The Indian diaspora in the U.S. was one of the most prosperous and educated groups in that country—successfully made-to-order, not only in helping convince Washington to forgive India's pro-Moscow Cold War tilt, but also using networks of family and friends in India to chip away at the hostility of several key officials toward a warming of ties with the U.S.

Nalapat started promoting the creation of formal ties between Americans of East Indian descent in 1992. By 1995, Indian-



Americans had formed lobbying organizations in Washington that were modeled—not accidentally—on the successful Jewish-American groups. Here also was a backdoor way to encourage closer relations between Israel and India. Nalapat saw Jewish Americans as the perfect ally for Indian Americans in Washington. "Indians and Jews shared a sense of trauma and slightly chaotic minds," he says. "They were born to be close." By 1999, the alliance between the two diasporas had begun to resonate in Capitol Hill.

The relationship became so strong that, in 2003, they played a large part in successfully lobbying the American govern-

Nalapat has no formal role in government, but when he speaks, politicians listen.

ment to allow Israel to sell Thales airborne early warning radar systems to India. In fact, in a decade India and Israel have gone from the simplest official relationship to Jerusalem being the second largest defense supplier to India (after Russia). The new Indo-Israeli U.S. security ties came out of the closest in 2003, with Nalapat, hosting a high-level trilateral conference in New Delhi. The following year the conference was held in Herzliya, Israel, a third will be held this month in Washington.

Nalapat has also turned his gaze toward Taiwan, a country he considers important to the balance of power in Asia. Because of a hesitation to provoke China—which shares a 3,400 km border with India—New Delhi had gingerly avoided closer contact with the island powerhouse whose exports are more than double India's. However, because of concern about China's growing might, several policy makers in New Delhi are appreciative of Nalapat's call to develop close scientific and business links with Taiwan. Since 2003, some key officials from both countries have been quietly visiting each other, and more than 5,000 Indian

high-tech personnel now work in Taiwan. To the Taiwanese, Nalapat has stressed commonalities. India and Taiwan are both democracies, something important to the Americans, India excels in software, Taiwan dominates in hardware, India needs investment, Taiwan looking to diversify. Some of that investment would be in India's high-tech sector. And there is also the huge Indian \$350 billion infrastructure market. India needs roads, ports and the like—projects in which the Taiwanese have an expertise.

But the matchmaker is playing an even larger game. His new proposal, pitched to Pentagon officials in September 2003, is for a North America Asia Treaty Organization (NAATO), anchored by the U.S. and India, that would serve as a security system for Asian democracies. Canada would also be a partner, along with Japan, Singapore, Australia and South Korea.

The Americans may be listening. The "core coalition" announced in December 2004 by George W. Bush to fight the effects of the killer tsunami was composed of the very same countries intended to form the heart of NAATO: the U.S. and India, along with Japan and Australia. While the latter two are no surprises, the presence of India, and the exclusion of China, is indicative of the future direction of alliances between North America and Asia. This is the first time that India has been at the core of a U.S. alliance. And the announcement of the tsunami coalition was closely followed by the visit of a U.S. delegation to New Delhi to discuss integrating India into the Bush administration's missile defense plan.

That India has a wild role to play in U.S. strategic interests is clear. "Who controls the Indian Ocean is very important," Sherman notes. "It is a major passage for smuggling arms and equipment for terrorist activity. It is preferable for India to control it than Iran. A strong Indian navy in the Indian Ocean is important for Israel and the United States. India is a strong source of stability in the area."

Informally, NAATO is already starting to come together. The Singapore military now trains in India. American warships refuel at Indian ports. Indian ships escort U.S. vessels through parts of the region. Both Japan and Australia have begun joint military exercises and intelligence sharing with India. Anything seems possible, as long as the matchmaking continues. ■



VICTORIA'S TAX NIGHTMARE

How phantom stock profits threaten to ruin a group of tech workers

EVERY SO OFTEN, powerful people suffer episodes of amnesia. They forget the details of a meeting or the intent of a policy. On occasion, they'll even confuse the meanings of simple words. They'll generally try to bluff their way through such situations in hopes their confusion might rub off on us and we might forget to challenge them on the particulars. These crises of selective disorientation seem especially prevalent on Parliament Hill. It would be easy enough to laugh them off, except that sometimes these matters

have profoundly destructive consequences for real live human beings.

One such case has been dragging on for four years now, taking a heavy toll on a handful of former employees of IDS Uniphase in Victoria, who've been fighting in vain to overturn massive tax bills levied on income they never received. Several times over the past few years (seemingly that their unrighteousness would soon end happily, Paul Martin himself suggested as much last spring. But every time they raised their heads, they hit the same wall of bureaucratic indifference.

Now they've run out of appeals. Unlucky ones of these apocalyptically disenfranchised folksters in Ottawa interview soon, Canada Revenue Agency will move in to collect taxes they never should have owed in the first place. For some, it will mean having to drain their life savings, or sell their homes, or declare bankruptcy.

All because people held a stock when they should have sold it. Because authorities have forgotten the intent of the tax code. Because politicians don't remember their promises. And because John McCallum, the minister of revenue, can't keep straight the difference between equality and fairness.

It all began with a perk. Part of the IDS benefits package was an employee stock purchase plan, which let workers buy company shares at a huge discount. As IDS's stock skyrocketed in 2000, workers were able to get shares worth more than \$100 for roughly \$2 apiece through small deductions from their paycheques. Many workers with modest incomes suddenly had visions of expensive cottages and early retirement. But the celebration was short-lived. The stock peaked

in March of 2000, then tumbled almost as fast as it rose. By the end of the year, it had dropped by 60 per cent.

The plunging share price was a disappointment, but the real disaster came that winter, when the tax forms arrived. Because the workers got stuck at a discount, they were taxed on the difference between what they paid and the stock's value on the date it was issued—\$395. Joe Wood worked as an engineer at IDS for \$40,000 a year, and he suddenly had a tax bill for \$134,000. By the time he realized what was happening, it was too late to sell—the shares had fallen by 80 per cent and were worth a fraction of the sum he owed. To make matters worse, IDS denied its Victoria plant in the summer of 2001, pouring Wood and hundreds of others out of work, with no way to pay their tax bills.

TRUE fairness often requires that people be treated differently. That's why we tax incomes at different rates, remember? Ottawa's offer of equality is a poor substitute.

For four years, they have pleaded and appealed, and gotten nowhere. The law alone keeps them receiving a taxable benefit, even if it never yielded a penny of income. Many workers eventually relented, cashing in RRSPs and taking out loans to pay what the CRA says they owe. But Wood and about 28 others have kept fighting. With interest, Wood's tax debt is now almost \$194,000. On his household income of about \$55,000 a year, the payments will be impossible. He will have to sell the house he shares with his wife, Anne-Pierre Wood, to settle the debt. At that point, the Woods' only hope is

political intervention. The law says the government can overturn any tax assessment deemed unfair, and last spring it seemed Paul Martin was only to do just that. While campaigning in Victoria, he told a group of IDS workers, and the local Liberal candidate working on their behalf, that help was on the way. "I've already asked Ralph Goodale to fix that up," he said. But another case of apocalyptic amnesia soon set in. The fix never materialized, and last month, Ottawa rejected the workers' final appeal.

When the local Conservative MP Gary Lunn asked why Martin had broken his word, McCallum rose in Parliament to defend his ministry. "What is critical is that each and every taxpayer knows that once the bill is issued, exactly the same in every other taxpayer," he said. "The integrity of the tax system requires that each and every taxpayer be treated in a manner that is fair in comparison with other Canadians." The contradiction in that statement is left on the monitor and his brain-erased. Fairness often requires that people be treated differently. That's why we tax incomes at

different rates, remember? If Ottawa can't bring itself to address the legal flaw of taxing income that never existed, it should at least be willing to recognize the tax code was never meant to crush people for the sake of phantom stock profits. But in this line of

fairness, Ottawa often equality, and it's a poor substitute. But news government is willing to screw you, and take everything you've worked for, on the basis of a foolish technology Goodness, at least everyone gets screwed equally. How comforting.

And what of Martin's promise? "In this a guy who is a pathological liar who will say anything and do anything not to get a vote?" Lunn asked in exasperation last week.

It's a legitimate question. Does the Prime Minister have the courage to answer it? **M**

Steve Mach is a reporter, "60 Seconds" at www.mach.ca/news/60seconds/

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OUR POLICY: MADE IN AMERICA

Post-9/11, Canada may simply become a client state of the Pentagon

THE HOSE-TIPPED potpourri of dramatically increased defence spending in the Martin government's recent budget reminds me of the preacher who tells his flock: "The good news is that we have enough funds to build the new addition to our church. The bad news is that it's still in your pocket."

Of the pledged \$12.8 billion in new defence funds paraded by Liberal spin doctors as the biggest spending hike for the military in 26 years, only \$1 billion will be invested during the next 24 months, the likely maximum tenure of the Paul Martin minority. These desperately required transport planes, all-terrain vehicles, supply ships, command

communication centres and just about everything that would turn the bedraggled remains of our once proud force into an effective military, and, probably will, be chopped by future governments choosing their own priorities.

That's why any meaningful discussion about our military must concern not future weaponry, but current obligations. There

we have a choice. Do we believe Frank McKenna, the new Canadian ambassador to Washington, who, when asked whether we ought to subscribe to American missile defence demands, replied, "The NORAD amendment has given part, in fact a great deal, of what the United States needs in terms of being able to get the

space for defensive weaponry?" Or do we accept Martin's assurance that Canada is opting out of George W. Bush's missile defence program? As it happens, they're both right.

The simple side of this conflict goes down to what the Prime Minister, having decided that discretion is the better part of valour when facing a loss of confidence from his own party, has come out against: enrolling Canada in Bush's anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system, based on intercepting hostile missiles travelling toward one another at a combined 24,000 km/h, has been labelled by retired Lt.-Gen. Robert Guérin, one of four dozen senior U.S. military experts who oppose its practicability, as "a useless accom-

pany in the sky." On the other hand, what McKenna seemed to be saying (at least as I hear him in one of those precious flashes of clarity before being reduced by his handlers to diplomatic doublespeak) was that the Americans have already gained unimpeded access to Canadian territory and most other aspects of our sovereignty, so that the missile decision is superfluous.

About the only fact that all sides who are at the know agree on is that Canadian defence policy is now being decided to an increasing degree behind closed doors at the Peterson Air Force base in Colorado, where 50 senior U.S. and Canadian military planners are debating joint future activities. This is the headquarters of the U.S.-North American Aerospace Command (NORTHCOM) which falls under the direct authority of Donald Rumsfeld. In April 2002, when the U.S. secretary

CANADA'S outlook
differs from that of the
Bush White House.
But military beggars
can't be choosers.

of defence announced formation of this new organization that in many ways supersedes NORAD, the North American Aerospace Defence Command, he boasted that "NORTHCOM, with all North America in its geographic command, is part of the greatest transformation of the unified command plan [Basic U.S. defence strategy] since its inception in 1947."

In late 2001, Jean Chrétien stood up in Washington's pressroom and turned down Canadian membership in NORTHCOM. This was born instead a high-level consultative body named the International Planning Group, which also operates out of the Pentagon base, with a mandate "to prepare contingency plans to respond to threats, attacks and other major emergencies in Canada or the United States." Just before Bush visited Ottawa last November, the co-chair of this planning group was extended into 2006. It was part of the President's pressure to get a new defence Martin that Canada should become a full-fledged North American Command participant. One PM's reaction is not known, but the Northern Command days are, we are being pressured to become an active

part of an anti-missile system with the defence of the continent as a joint assignment to U.S. and Canadian forces. Guess who'll be calling the shots?

Not joining the mid-cap anti-missile missile weapons system was an easy decision since, even if it works (which its own designers believe is highly doubtful), it will almost certainly never be called into action. If the logic reasons that Bush classifies as belonging to the "axis of evil" ever decide to attack the U.S., it would be with weapons of mass destruction hidden in ships, trucks or civilian planes. Intercontinental ballistic missiles are not only far too expensive, but satellite cameras could immediately identify their launchers, which would be seized by U.S. cruise missiles launched from submarines permanently stationed off the Iranian and North Korean shores.

So the debate that matters comes down to how much, if any, of our sovereignty can survive the current "buge" of North America by unknown hostile forces. That has been Canada's dilemma since the 1930s, when the subject of joint defence was first mentioned by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in a speech in Kingston, Ont. "The people of the United States will not stand by if domination of Canada is threatened by any other empire." That same week, Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King replied in kind. "Every force should not be able to pursue their way either by land, sea or air to the United States." The substance of that exchange, later formalized by the Ottawa-Burlington Agreement of 1946, has been the operational code of continental defence ever since. It worked because, despite their jury size and firepower, the members of Canada's navy, army and air force have always managed to earn their way in combat or civilian enterprises, gaining the respect of their big Yankee brothers.

At the same time, the Americans and Canadians were always involved in common causes, so that sovereignty seldom mattered. It does now. Our international outlook is suddenly different from the world as seen through the united gaze of Bush's Oval Office. But military beggars can't be choosers. The defence of the continent has become and will be. It may well be that the dramatic legacy of 9/11 will be Canada's tragedy, but inevitable, because it is becoming a client state of the Pentagon. Pray for us. ■

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BOOZER FROM OUTER SPACE

A Canuck talent makes a hilariously zany debut



MOST CANADIAN movies defy simple description. Imagine pitching *Dead Ringers*: it's a darkly comic tragedy of twin, drug-addicted, sociopathic gynecologists and the patients they both have sex with. Or *Asian in a Film* within a film about a Toronto family grappling with Mueler Gerky, the Armenian genocide and the impossibility of portraying it. Even our comedies tend to be acerbically constructed, and more clever than laugh-overload funny—from *The Sadist Muse* to *the World*, about aimless Winnipeg beer barons who stage an Olympian contest to find the most tearful raucous on the planet, to *Childstar*, a film within a film about a lone driver babysitting a spoiled actor

on the Toronto set of a Hollywood movie.

Rob Stefaniuk seems determined to change all that. He's made a movie that could be sold with just two words scribbled on a cocktail napkin: drunken alien. Or, if you want a more elaborate synopsis:

Stefaniuk was writer, director, star, etc., for his obviously charming movie.

Stefaniuk doesn't look that different from the hoar alien he plays in *Phil of the Alien*, an offbeat sci-fi comedy. He has a shock of sandy hair that sticks straight up and deep-set, glacier-blue eyes. Stefaniuk scans the fancy dining room elegantly, bypassing the steaks and sea bass, settles on a cheeseburger, fries and a decaf Diet Coke.

"I've had so much coffee today I feel like I'm on crack," he says, explaining the caffeine-free beverage. Later, still feeling jittery, he agrees to a beer. At various intervals where he's shown his movie, Stefaniuk kept meeting people who wanted him to be in character. "When you're the drunk alien guy, you've got to take it easy, stalling. The Saturday-morning-also-called-real-Phil, have another beer! (Phil) And they'd make me do some of these or 'hoo-Phil, say 'I'm medicine.' Say 'I'm a surgeon.' 'I'll do it!'"

Stefaniuk's version of Stefaniuk's latest steps on the festival circuit. With the Utah film-going indie circuit, *Phil of the Alien*, which played at Sundance, the agrarian festival across the street. Sundance did, however, select *Wine for the Muse*, a film about a Toronto filmmaker who concocted just to prove he was qualified to direct *Phil of the Alien*—the director for the film. Canuck's low-budget feature film fund,



he created a difficult crowd. The short took just an hour, from coming up with the idea, to shooting, editing and transferring the film to DVD. Stefaniuk was flabbergasted to find himself promoting *Wine for the Muse* in a 1,279-seat theater at Sundance, preceding a feature directed by Steve Buscemi.

The son of a legal secretary and an accounts manager, Stefaniuk grew up outside Toronto, in Ajax and Oshawa. "My brother was a musician," he recalls, "so from the time I was 5, I was on stage doing stuff." Moving to the city, he attended the Claude Watson School for the Arts, then enrolled at York University. But after two months he

dropped out and became a street musician. Stefaniuk also did session acting jobs, and at 22 he landed a role as the lead guitarist in *Catfish*, an MTV series he describes as "90210 meets *The Muppet*." He played with a lot of rock bands back on and off screen—

"I was always the guy with the guitar." Acting, however, left him disenchanted. "I decided I never wanted to act again," he says. "I never made money more than when I was acting, and I was never more unhappy." That's when he wrote his first movie script, a small slacker comedy called *The Size of Watermelons* (1996), directed by Canada's Ben Sieglund.

The director says he "passed away" his late 20s playing music and banking his promise to himself by taking the odd acting job. "Then I turned 30 and said, 'What the hell am I doing?'" So the slacker wrote work. He helped produce *Public Domain*, a dark

comedy satire about a surveillance genre show with cameras who don't know they're on camera—a first feature written and directed by Stefaniuk's girlfriend, Kim Lefcoe.

Wondering how to connect his own low-budget movie, Stefaniuk realized he could get free access to a costume shop run by his brother, Ron, the musician who had grown up to be a special effects artist. "I started thinking of the alien and his beaver, and it was literally that simple—alien, beaver, Canadian alien," I thought, "What would an alien do in Canada? Get drunk!" Stefaniuk's brother created a talking beaver for *Phil of the Alien*. And SCTV starman Joe Flaherty agreed to do the voice, putting a cast that includes Graham Greene as a Scottish bartender, Nicole DeBoer as a French Canadian Muti-Han—and Sean Gaffney, who delivers a hilarious cameo as a patron making preposterous demands of a waiter played by Canadian Idol Ryan Reynolds.

Phil of the Alien has a cheap, ramshackle quality, but that's part of its charm. It's the movie equivalent of a garage band: if it were any better it wouldn't be so good. Stefaniuk has irrefutable appeal as the hoar from another planet who's in no hurry to get back, although he undertakes a fall acting search before executive and co-producer Michael Hordley finally convinced him to play the role. "Rob's greatest strength is his work ethic," says Hordley. "The effort filmmaker makes is not one he would ever put on. Rob is a guy who could be as commercially successful as you could hope for, yet he would implode before commercials are on ideah."

Stefaniuk has scripted a feature drama called *Run for Harland*, but won't direct because he wants to stick to the funny stuff. His next movie will be a mock 'n' roll vampire comedy called *Jack* (female bass player shares a needle with a vampire in Montreal as lead leads out for love). Stefaniuk plans to play the lead but he'll gladly step aside if a real movie star is cast. At Sundance he met a few, including Robert B. Redford and Bruce Campbell, who was most flattered by the letter, who introduced his short film with effusive praise. So did they hang out? Stefaniuk shrugs. "I saw him in a party but didn't want to bother him. He was surrounded by people working in his picture taken with him and giving him scripts. I was surrounded by a different type of people, the drunk type. 'We gotta go to this place right now.' Phil!"

DEEPLY silly, *Phil of the Alien* is the movie equivalent of a garage band: if it were any better it wouldn't be as good

MIDNIGHT COWGIRL

An artist takes Manhattan with her new CD

AT 11 P.M., Kathleen Edwards boards a Greyhound bus in Ottawa bound for New York City. Around midnight, she hits the U.S. border. "Why are you going to New York?" asks the customs officer. "I'm a musician, I'm performing," Edwards answers. "Where are you performing?" is the next question. "On the David Letterman show," is Edwards' response. The officer is unimpressed. "Uh-huh, right, that's how most people go to

Letterman, on the overnight Greyhound."

The 26-year-old singer-songwriter would really have been putting it had she informed the border guard last week that this would be her third Letterman appearance, or that she considers the talk show host largely responsible for the initial buzz around her debut CD, *Ruler*, back in 2003 (he invited Edwards on twice in three months and featured over the album). But why the Midnight Cowgirl trip to Manhattan anyway? Well, there was no way a snowstorm and two cancelled flights were going to keep the Ottawa artist from launching her follow-up CD, *Back to Me*, on the Late Show. "I want him on *Arsenio* [sic]," Edwards says a few days before heading to New York. "We'll see if the Blackalby he does—[sings] a lot of money on it. By giving him something like that, I hope he can understand how much I appreciated the opportunity. It's one of those things where no one takes notice until one person takes notice."

After she did Letterman two years ago,

Leto came calling. Around the same time, Rolling Stone named Edwards an artist to watch; later, the magazine featured her in a fashion spread. While it took that kind of U.S. attention to win her a following back home, she now has the support of this country, and especially of those who'd like to see a down-to-earth roots-rocker join the celebrity ranks of Avril, Norah, Shania and Celine.

When Edwards comes onstage, Letterman isn't wearing the tie, but he thanks her for it and spends a great deal of on-air time affectionately making fun of her album's cover photo (she's sitting in a field of tall grass with her back to the camera). Dressed in a fitted army jacket, shirley neck top, jeans and groovy blue high heels, she foot-stomps and rocks her way through the new CD's title track (first single on which she teams an ex-boyfriend with all the ways she could woo him back). Like the best songs on her first album, this number is packed with wit, attitude and sexuality. "I've got songs to make you crazy / I wear all the things you always

With critical accolades and another spot on Letterman, Edwards is riding high



wanted me to / I've got ways to make you rock / My daddy is coming for you... I've got more / I've never used / I've got ways to make you come / Back to me. Letterman can't take his eyes off the monitor that provides the best view of her performance.

AFTER FAHEY'S RELEASE, Edwards spent two years touring, singing songs about loath and *disappointing* men. All the while, she was falling in love with the guitarist standing by her left. Edwards had heard about John Cripps (who played with Jarkhouse, Jell-Cuddly and Crash Vegas) from her friend and Jarkhouse front man Joni Wolfson—he said they'd hit it off. Soon after the album came out, she asked Cripps, who's in his early 40s, to join the band. "We were friends for a couple of weeks," she says. "But we totally, I don't know—I felt like I was hanging out with a movie star the whole time. I could barely keep my shit together when I was with him. I was going in like 'He's just like a pretty major talent.'"

By the end of the exhausting tour, Edwards had moved from the farmhouse she was writing in Woodfield, Que., outside of Ottawa, into Cripps's Toronto home. She had gone from waitress back to born-again recording artist—and the upheaval is chronicled in many of the songs on her new album. In *Away*, success takes its toll on her old life and friendships. *I don't know who to call / I don't know who to write / And I think I forgot / what your face looks like / I've been away. And in Capital City*, Cripps gets a piece of her (marriage) rind: *This is not my town and it will never be / This is our apartment / filled with your things / This is your life / I got caught here*.

Edwards confesses she still doesn't have many friends in Toronto, but she's making up for it. She and Cripps got married in the summer and spent their honeymoon in the studio recording *Back To Me*. "He was my producer, and I was his bro," Edwards laughs. Her U.S. record label, Rounder, had offered money for a bigger name to produce. "Why answer to that," says Edwards, "was 'The last thing I want to do at this point in my career is get produced by using a producer who may have been very successful but who I don't know. I am still trying to get my head around what I actually do, and I don't want to have someone making me feel like their decision is much more weighted than mine.'"



In person she seems more sensitive than her hard-drinking, take-no-crap stage persona.

Edwards was nervous about the sophomore album, the fact that you have your whole life to write a debut and six months for your follow-up. *Autonomy* reviewers, and the NYC audience she played for last week, seem to appreciate the fact that she and Cripps took to what Edwards did right the first time around—gritty rock, guitar-driven country/rock/folk storytelling as written. Like Lucinda Williams or Neil Young. Only this time,

a post-Letterman NYC dialog, she usually handles things well as people stare into the claustrophobically small downtown dressing room. Some are label and radio station reps; she's happy to answer and grin. Some are very casual acquaintances; the doc her best to make small talk with. Upfront a woman wants advice, but instead of giving a taste she just says she's from Bedford, Ont., which is close to the singer's hometown of Ottawa—confused. Edwards responds, "I'll be 'til I come up later." But when a tense exchange breaks out between her tour manager and some creepy guy no one knows, Edwards bolts from the room. She can be found not much later huddled alone in the corner of a dark hallway, feet almost completely covering her head—and she's beyond ready to go back to the hotel.

The next day, over a very hot and the City-style breakfast in a nearby restaurant location, she explains her flight into the night before. "I was very uncomfortable. There was no one to go down there and accept the bathroom, where we sat and had for five minutes. I thought, 'What am I doing? Can I leave?' I can't leave, no one else is ready. What's happening? Get me out of here."

The breakdown was parried. After all, in a 24-hour period she endured a 12-hour bus ride, performed on Letterman and laid out her brand new material in front of a discriminating New York audience. And all this on the day her second CD has stores. That's a story to impress even the toughest outsiders.

SIMPLY IRRESISTIBLE

Montreal's Simple Plan has parlayed catchy punk into world success

ABOUT 2,000 young people are lined up outside London's Astoria Theatre all the way to Soho Square. This is a self-consciously cool crowd in black (turtleneck, tattoos and hair dye). These English kids would look tough if they weren't too young, which isn't preventing many of them from sucking back bottles of beer liquor. They're out for a raucous good time, and Simple Plan, a Canadian pop-punk band that has sold five million albums worldwide, is sliding to join them.

When the Fab Five appear onstage, girls shriek like teenagers in old B-grade footage. Left hands with back-torn horns soar up in their right hands; right hands with the video-camera function of cellphones. The audience doesn't have to be prodded to join in for the chorus of their eighth, *Take Up! I!* seems this crowd knows the words to Simple Plan's two albums by heart.

Simple Plan's first CD, *No Fucks, No Rules*, was released in 2002. It has been a bonfire in markets as diverse as Canada, Mexico and Malaysia, where the quintet almost triggered a riot while signing autographs in a Kuala Lumpur music store. Since its release in 2002, *No Fucks* has sold two million copies in the U.S., where the band's second album, *Still Not Getting Any*, went platinum four months after its release last October. (Lead singer Pierre Bouvier, 25, is now hosting MTV's new *Dawgstar Control* series.) The band's anthems in American arenas to relentless scoring. In fact, the musicians have performed in all but two states. "We've toured the U.S. so often," says guitarist Jeff Stinson, 26, "that we've lost track."

Simple Plan's members are all native French speakers, but they're only in English. Their level of fluency is such that they sound as if they had two mother tongues. They grew up on well-off Montreal suburbs. Four of the five met and started playing together at Collège Beaudouin, their private school in Montreal. They would rehearse in Bouvier's family basement. His father, Rik, who owns a transport company, drove



Cornieu (left), Wilkins, Bouvier, Stinson and Bouvier

them around when they started touring Canada and the U.S. Their parents

were just amazed when the boys started talking about dropping out of school to pursue music full time. "It's like we were born to be a band," says Bouvier. "We were never serious about it," says drummer Jeff Stinson, 25. "It's always been a hobby thing."

Critics have used euphemisms like "happy punk" and "corporate punk" to describe Simple Plan's pop-boy hard music. It's true their lyrics—"I'm just a kid and life is a nightmare"—make Avril Lavigne sound grown up. But the musicians, who also include David Desrosiers (bass) and Sébastien Lévesque (guitar), are unfazed, saying they never

set out to connect with young people. He says Simple Plan songs have a "true emotional impact" that's reflected in their fan mail—including "hundreds" of letters from kids who say they've contemplated suicide. "When you're a 30-year-old journalist and you're a big deal, it's easy to say that we're naive and insignificant," points out Cornieu.

At the Astoria Theatre, the show is drawing to an end. The band exits, then returns for the encore. A grinning Cornieu is the first to come back—with a big Union Jack. It's one of a politically charged gesture in Britain. This crowd roars, clearly ecstatic to punk's anti-rationalist tradition. How did that old Sex Pistols song go? God save the Queen? The fastest reaction: Maybe someone in the audience remembers—but these boys and girls just want to have fun.

LETTERMAN can't take his eyes off the monitor that provides the best view of her performance

the whole package, is tighter, more confident and accomplished. Already Edwards is thinking about the next album. "I guess I worry as time goes on that I'll have less adolescent kinds of things to put down out in my songs," says Edwards about her bad-girl lyrics, "and that I'm going to have to become one of those songwriters who tell other people's stories all the time."

In fact, this daughter of senior federal government bureaucrat Leonard and housewife Margaret is a lot more mature and sensitive than her hard-drinking, foul-mouthed, take-no-crap stage persona. After



Moby finishes John Intini's sentences

libby, the geek-turned-world-famous-DJ who made electronic music mainstream, suffers the occasional panic attack, but never shuns the spotlight. He recently taped his second episode of MTV's *Debris* and regularly shares personal details on his fan site. The 29-year-old New Yorker, who releases *Hotel* this month, linked Maclean's Associate Editor John Maclean's sentences.

NEW JERSEY *It's a day and filled 200,000 bottles of local tea for a new business.*
THE CELEBRITY WHO NEEDS A SECOND CHANCE *is Martin Lawrence. I loved Martin. He was a such a gifted comic.*
THE BEST SIMPSON'S CHARACTER *in the early '90s was Lisa, but she's become stiff and one-dimensional. I'd have to go with Homer. He's the most complicated and absurd Simpson.*

I MET JOHN WAYNE — when I was four, but vaguely remember shaking his hand. He didn't say anything, but I do have an amusing recording of him addressing a group of right-wing businessmen in the late '80s, drunk out of his mind.

a hedonistic Christmas party four years ago, I noticed a spot and had an open list. It was the middle of winter and everyone was in bathing suits. But far from *Molloy* or *Orléans*-style decadence,

FOR MORE "JOHN INTENT'S SENTENCES" VISIT WWW.MACLEANSCAUSIDE.E

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Books | Hell freezes over in Boston

Why not try? Leigh Alston's travels to Britain and Los Angeles for people who suffered more than their players during the baseball team's 19-year absence from the city are a testament to his devotion to the city and its fans. So after all, will receive their 2004 Series rings next month in Miami Stadium, the home fans of Jose Berroa and Luis Valdez, the two players who played the most years in a hitting accomplishment to their fellow teammates. Ministers of the United States Mission, including the yoga instructor who climbed an Indian temple to the top of the mountain to the incident gave to counter whatever crime was holding her team back, can relate the decades of honor that made an excellent baseball team. The team's success is a testament to the players who gave birth to the psychology of their survival. This is a team that is a testament to the players who gave birth to the psychology of their survival. This is a team that is a testament to the players who gave birth to the psychology of their survival.



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Shanda Dziel | [online culture](#)

Unartful dodgers of adulthood

More and more grown-ups are too serious about hanging onto their childhood

HEAD-SET DODGE BALL. It's a Sunday afternoon, and it's time a public school gym with five close friends, playing a game that evolved from when we were kids: dodge-point-fuss-and-it-must-run. Since the 2004 release of the Ben Stiller and Vince Vaughn movie *Dodgeball*, a Toronto sports club has hosted tournaments and started a league. It was exciting that people would come to the event with their tongues in their cheeks. My team was certainly approaching the day as you would bowling or lacrosse—as a laugh. But as I'm standing all alone on the court, staring down a firing squad of four footbal-plus-guys, all wishing up for attack, it's clear they're out for the blood. And there's no gym teacher to intervene.

This do-die half journey is indicative of a generation who are holding onto their childhood activities much longer than even their famously Peter Panish parents did—and, yet, are kind of embarrassed about doing so. To compensate, they look for ways to make things more adult appropriate. For many, that means more serious. Video games are a per-

For example: After a certain age, barns less animated titles like Pac-Man and Super Mario Bros. don't cut it anymore. But instead of giving up the joys of old, today's young adults are driving the demand for gritty, "realistic" re-creations of games featuring war, crime and other mature themes—like hanging out at the *Blondie Mansion*.

The name can be used of comic books. Boys and girls now

on an as-needed basis, and many continue to have a hard time for these characters' later in life—watching TV shows like *Lark: A Clerk in Heavenside*, or checking out the latest *Artemis* or *Spider-Man* books. In a while most older generations have left come book collecting behind, 20- and 30-year-olds today are still buying more as than kids. This led to other stories. An anecdote of *Spider-Man* is still about Aunt May talking to her therapist. And in *Mad Max* films, the rage-bitch could be considered as a rip-off. "The problem," says Brian McLaughlin, who writes comics for kids (poet, anguished), and the adult *Never No Dead Time*, "is that it's easier for comic writers to move with their audience than to try and being to new, younger readers. In the same way that *Rolling Stone* is now for old people."

The other way to legitimize holding onto a childhood passion is to change its name: comics are fine books, we read graphic novels. Michaelson would like to see a new member for Dungeons & Dragons (Eh, some adults still play). "El' Frobbot, a boy you throw in a bag, is now called Ultimate," he jokes, "then D & D could be Awesome or Supreme."

As for dodge ball, when those four jocks nailed me in the chest, gut, arm and back, it seemed that this "fun" sport might also need a more adult appropriate handle. Murderball, unfortunately, is already taken.

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STUCK ON THE SAME PAGE

I'm not sure when it started, but I've become a serial book-unfinisher

MY FRIEND B is all hot on a fancy spy novelist named Alan Furst. He eagerly thrusts into my hands one of Furst's books, *Kingdom of Shadows*. Gave me the he's-a-good-yea's-to-look-to-be-reading-his-for-the-first-time talk. I have long believed it to be crasier than me, so I absently set to work.

Same enough, the book has sex, death, trains and double-crosses in full-blown context of Nazi-occupied Europe. I made it to page 101 before I completely ran out of interest. "Draw the map," Norway said. "Don't forget the elevator for the shells." I realised I had forgotten

given who Norway was or who he was talking to. So much for Alan Furst.

I discussed my dilemma with 30-year-old friend "Oleynka," began me a couple of those to read too," she said. "I couldn't finish them."

Thus enlightened, I broke the news to B: "I'm not going to finish the Alan Furst book."

He took it well, I thought. The answering email read: "Crises."

That's how I feel, too. It is a dark burden to bear, this business of not finishing books. You start out with all the goodwill in the world. You flip the pages delightfully.

Then order of acquaintances expands by a dozen or more as this act of made-up people enters your life. And before you realise, you find out how it all turns out for them, you set them aside. What's your problem?

You feel anguished, somehow. The author just put his life into these people, and I can't even risk around to see who lives or who dies? And yet, as I stare at the books in my library, I realise I have become a serial book-unfinisher.

Last spring I got tired of politicians who don't know the first thing about how to do politics. (Three guesses what got me into that state of mind.) I bought Paul Groudsell's *I Rode Like a Rocket: The Political Education of Theodore Roosevelt*. It's an engaging tale. Great fun. At one point the young Roosevelt, a Harvard-educated New York City boy, lights out for the badlands of the Dakota Territory, where the cowboy locals find him more delightful than ridiculous,



but only by the narrowest of margins. At one point Groudsell has Roosevelt suffering up and churning to his horsepaw colleagues, "Hasten forward quickly there," and soon every cowboy in the badlands is shouting the same thing and roaring with laughter.

Great stuff. What happened? Couldn't tell you. My bookends read at page 208, and it will probably stay there. I'm given to understand things worked out pretty well for Roosevelt's lines, but I deny any knowledge of the details.

Don't get me wrong. I don't abandon every book at the halfway point. Sometimes I give up way before that. Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March* is sitting beside my bed with a bookmark sitting at the beginning of Chapter 6. It'll probably stay there until I move it to the library, where it will defraud party guests who will think me literate. My cousin Jerry, who wrote her master's thesis on Bellow,

won't be impressed. Sorry, Jon.

Every once in a while I actually finish a book. This gives me a false sense of breadth, which is promptly crushed. I loved Richard Ford's novel *The Sportswriter*, so I bought the Pulitzer-winning sequel, *Hotel Providence*. I made it to page 142. In this book, Ford's character, Frank Bascombe, is selling real estate. When I was house-hunting I recalled anecdotes from page one to 142 to my real-estate agent. It made me feel vaguely glib. I prayed he wouldn't ask me a trick question about something that happens on page 148.

I loved *Back on Broadway*, David Giler's novel about drinking. I loved *How Boys See Girls*, his novel about sex. I finished *An Affair With the Moon*, the next one. And *Lost Between Moons*, the one after that? Well, I bought it.

Blame or credit for my reading a book and then with nobody but me. Quality has nothing to do with it. I've cheerfully abandoned some of the great books of the English language. I read *Tortilla Flat* and *Century House* and *Sweet Thursday* and *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck. But *The Grapes of Wrath*? Abandoned at page 176. This time there was actually a reason. Steinbeck was starting too many sentences with "and." And it was getting on my nerves. And it was turning into a cheap gimmick. And I'd had enough of it. And I know that's a lame reason. And I don't care.

Don DeLillo's *Underworld* was my great reading project of 1997. It was still my great reading project four years later. I gave up at page 745, only 72 pages from the end. How you win, Don. The first 60 pages of that book are so beautiful I didn't want to resort them by suffering through the last 72.

You'd think I'd have an affinity for back pages, given my berth in this magazine. Funny how I almost never see one.

To comment: backpage@redhatters.co.uk
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